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DEAN SWIFT







DEAN SWIFT

BY J. G. F. F. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, DUBLIN

# DEAN SWIFT

BY

SOPHIE SHILLETO SMITH

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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## PREFACE

THE biographer of Dean Swift is confronted by an almost superhuman task. Perhaps more untruth has been circulated about Swift than about any other character in history. At any rate the sum total is greater, because he possesses four distinct personalities, those of the priest, the statesman, the writer and the man. He has thus been exposed to a fourfold attack, emanating from those who hold the field in history, literature, in ecclesiastical matters, in medicine and in psychology. At the present time, perhaps, the tide is turning in his favour. We hope it may continue to do so. In the mean time let those who think about him at all, much more write about him, give him the benefit of an open mind. Certain damning criticisms of modern times have unfortunately been allowed circulation. Two of these are so terribly unjust, so entirely lacking in the mere elements of that tolerance and charity which the most despicable sinner has a right to expect from his fellow-men, that it is difficult to think of them with equanimity, especially when we consider that the author of one of them is a Churchman of high standing. It is true that Lord Orrery and Thackeray are responsible for much of this hostile criticism, but surely now in these days of psychology, the great men of the past may be treated with the same

insight as those of the present, and no one may be condemned without a hearing.

As far as possible I have had recourse to original and contemporary authorities, with special reference to works which could in any sense be called autobiographical. Of more modern works I am chiefly indebted to the latest edition of Swift's Prose works edited by Temple Scott; to the volumes of letters edited by Brimley Johnson and Birkbeck Hill; and to the life of Swift by Sir Leslie Stephen.

The anecdotes and stories, without which a life of Swift would be incomplete, have been chiefly derived from a volume of "Swiftiana," published in 1804; from the "Life of Swift" by Thomas Sheridan written in the year 1785, and from Lord Orrery's "Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift," published in 1752. Needless to say, I cannot vouch for their authenticity.

I have much pleasure in acknowledging here a debt of gratitude which cannot easily be repaid, to Mr. E. Armstrong, by whose interest the work was initiated and by whose kindly encouragement of a pessimistic beginner its progress was much facilitated.

SOPHIE SHILLETO SMITH

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## INTRODUCTION

**I**N venturing to place before a critical public this biography of Dean Swift I beg to offer an *apologia* of the nature of the work. To those students of history who may chance to lay it aside in disgust, as an unhistorical work; to those students of literature who look on it as an unnecessary defence of a writer whom they regard as unpardonably indecent; to those critics who object to the facts of a man's life being associated with his work, I offer one answer.

I have written the life neither of a saint nor a fiend; I have neither dragged him down to hell nor raised him to heaven, I have dressed him neither in black nor in white; I have not attired him in scarlet, nor endowed him with a cloven hoof, setting him to dance among fiends worse than himself.

I have tried to place him in the grey light of reality where perhaps some sunbeams may shine upon him and occasionally cast a golden reflection, where the clouds surrounding him may sometimes be pink-tinged. But above all I have tried to represent him as a man of like passion with ourselves, of a like longing for affection, of a like sensitiveness to pain or injury. If I have done this, I have succeeded in what I wished to do, and I ask for nothing more than appreciation of the man Swift, in the human setting of life as it is.





# DEAN SWIFT

## CHAPTER I

### SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE AND HIS SECRETARY

THE ugly duckling of the literary world, hideous through its misproportioned frame and uncontrollable limbs, is, as a rule, an abortion, and confronts its mediocre mother, the century in which it is compelled to exist, not only with defiance, but also with bitter reproach, on account of its premature existence.

Thus Jonathan Swift passed through the unfortunate succession of sordid and sunless childhood, morbid and friendless youth, to an early maturity in which alone there was any possibility of happiness for him. The early part of his life is of importance solely because we learn from it how there came to be in his character certain inherent and acquired elements which dominated his later life. "Poverty," says our latest authority on the facts of life, "is a thing to be ashamed of," and this Swift, as a boy, and later, as a young man, found to be pre-eminently true. Two of the most important factors in his life were poverty and disease, and both came to him as a heritage which could neither be squandered by a

dissolute heir, nor put out at interest by a prudent investor. For Swift, as for others, they formed a shadow which only tended to disappear when Fortune's sun was at the meridian; which, in the morning of life, was darkly visible because contrasted with the shadowless and sunlit course of others and in the evening, lengthened and deepened, because its possessor halted more frequently, beset by doubts as to his way.

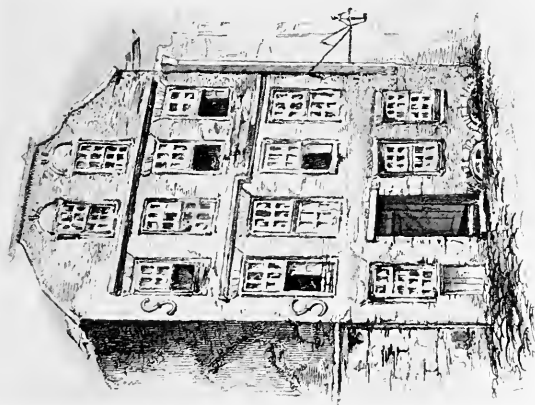
He was the posthumous son of Jonathan Swift, the descendant of an old Yorkshire family. Pre-eminent among the members of this family was Thomas Swift, a strong supporter of the Royalists, who lost his property and involved his descendants in ruin through his devotion to the cause. Moreover, he is perhaps responsible for that strong and uncompromising attitude of defence of the Church, and unshaken loyalty, which formed another main influence in Swift's career.

His father's virtues, however, were not enough to save Jonathan Swift the elder from a life of poverty.

Just after his marriage in 1666 he was Steward of the King's Inns, Dublin, but unfortunately died a little more than a year later. His widow had to face the world with an infant daughter, seven months later with a baby, and with little or no income to carry on their education. The family was therefore dependent on relations for support, a fact which considerably embittered Swift's life. His precocious childhood has left behind none of those tiny reminiscences which make or mar the childhood of the



HOE'S COURT AS IT IS TO-DAY



THE HOUSE IN HOE'S COURT IN WHICH  
SWIFT WAS BORN



genius. His autobiographical record of this time is merely the expression of a grievance, first that he was brought into the world at all, secondly that that event took place in Ireland, and thus confused his nationality. His schooldays at Kilkenny School, and his college days at Trinity College, Dublin, have left no distinguished record. The truth, derived from many conflicting traditions, appears to have been, that his bent of mind did not accord with the prescribed studies of the University. It was perhaps a case of a strong personality trying to impress itself on its surroundings. The story of insubordination to college authorities appears to point, as in so many cases, to a strong character moved by a spirit from within, trying once and for all to overthrow that unreasoning authority, which, having tradition for its throne, and ignorance for its footstool, veils itself so thickly in the purple of high places, that it cannot see the light of day about it.

He left Trinity College with a character for dullness and insubordination, and, strangely enough, with a degree allowed him by special favour.

The dispersion of the students of Trinity College owing to the Revolution of 1689, sent Swift, a somewhat aimless and inconsequent young man, to live with his mother at Leicester. She was a pleasant homely woman of frugal temperament and an invaluable capacity for making the best of things. From her Swift inherited a sense of humour and a very practical method of making practical jokes. A host in herself, in the midst of a life of poverty and

sordidness, she refused to be conquered by the machinations of an unkind fortune. The appearance of her son, without means or future, with, perhaps, little definite bent or inclination, and his prospects in Ireland ruined, was not enough to daunt her, though her own income was barely twenty pounds a year. Her love for her son was warmly reciprocated. It is the first of those strong deep affections which form so pleasant an element in his life. During her lifetime he carried on a regular correspondence with her, and her death in 1710 was a great loss to him. "I have now lost the last barrier between me and death," he wrote. "God grant I may be as well prepared for it as I confidently believe her to have been! If the way to Heaven be through piety, truth, justice and charity, she is there."

Probably there was in her some of the Cornelian spirit, for she appears to have had no wish to keep her son at home, though she would have willingly shared with him her last farthing. It is a surprise to find that the later cold censor of women could in these days cause his mother a certain amount of anxiety by flirtation. He had reason to speak of the inhabitants of Leicester as a "set of fools" who disturbed his peace by their chatter. He appears to have taken himself so seriously that he could attribute these pastimes to a restlessness of disposition, due to lack of definite occupation, but at the same time, he explains that his cold nature would prevent him from treating these things too seriously. That he was right about his cold nature is incontestably

proved by his later life. A letter written to a relation of his throws rather a different light on his view of life at that time. He entirely denies any intention to marry until he has settled his fortune in the world. "And even then," he adds, "I am so hard to please, that I suppose I shall put it off to the other world. How all that suits with my behaviour to the woman in hand, you may easily imagine, when you know that there is something in me which must be employed: and when I am alone, turns all, for want of practice, into speculation and thought; insomuch that those seven weeks I have been here, I have writ and burnt, and writ again upon all manner of subjects, more than perhaps any man in England. And this is it which a person of great honour in Ireland (who was pleased to stoop so low to look into my mind) used to tell me, that my mind was like a conjured spirit, that would do mischief if I would not give it employment. It is this humour that makes me so busy when I am in company to turn all that way; and since it commonly ends in talk, whether it be love or conversation, it is all alike. This is so common, that I could remember twenty women in my life to whom I have behaved myself just the same way; and I profess without any other design than that of entertaining myself when I am very idle, or when something goes amiss in my affairs. This I always have done as a man of the world, when I had no design for anything grave in it, and what I thought at worst a harmless impertinence; but whenever I begin to make sober

resolutions, or, as now, to think of entering into the Church, I never found it would be hard to put off this kind of folly in the porch. Besides, perhaps in so general a conversation among that sex, I might pretend a little to understand where I am when I am going to choose for a wife: and though the cunning sharper of the town may have a cheat put on him, yet it must be cleanlier carried than this, which you think I am going to top upon myself . . . your hints at particular stories I do not understand, and having never heard them but so hinted, thought it proper to give you this, to shew how I thank you for your regard of me; and I hope my carriage will be such as that my friends need not be ashamed of the name. I should not have behaved myself after that manner I did in Leicester, if I had not valued my own entertainment, beyond the obloquy of a parcel of fools, which I solemnly pronounce the inhabitants of Leicester to be, and so I content myself with retaliation. I hope you will forgive this trouble."

Both Swift and his mother were agreed on one point, that he must at once find some occupation, and that mother's instinct which, for once, was right in seeing a swan in her goose offspring, determined her in seeking for him the highest possible opportunity of advancement. Luckily for Swift she was connected with Lady Temple, and her opportune use of this relationship was the occasion which produced in one individual, for the Church a priest, for the country a statesman, for English literature a satirist, of extraordinary merit in each capacity.



In this case perhaps opportunity made the man, for no one could anticipate future greatness for the youth, who, in 1689, appeared at Sheen, the residence of Sir William Temple. He was then twenty-two, of ordinary habits, as yet without any of the eccentricities which marked him later, and which so frequently characterize the youth of the genius of later development. His morbidness and introspectiveness of temperament were evident in his moody and saturnine expression. The strong sense of humour which helped him later was as yet undeveloped, and could not counteract his absorbing self-consciousness. Shy and sensitive he could be overwhelmed by a cold look of his patron. "Don't you remember," he wrote to Stella in 1711, "how I used to be in pain when Sir William Temple would look cold and out of humour for three or four days, and I used to suspect a hundred reasons?" His sensitiveness naturally arose from deep-seated pride which was coupled with a strong independence of character, a quality which, inherently strong in him, had been much fostered by a compulsory dependence for subsistence on more wealthy relations in his youth. His natural restiveness of character seems to have been held under a strong curb during the first residence with his patron, for in 1690, Sir William Temple wrote of him as of a promising young clerk, "He has Latin and Greek, some French, and writes a very good current hand, is very honest and diligent."

There is much to be said in favour of Temple's treatment of Swift. So far the secretary had given

his employer no reason to think differently from the opinion expressed in this testimonial to his character, indeed Swift never, either in early manhood, or later, during his life, took pains to ingratiate himself with men. With women it was different. Even though a dependant in the Temple household, he was on excellent terms with Lady Temple and her sister, Lady Giffard, and maintained with them a lasting friendship, in spite of the rift with the latter caused later by the publication of Temple's works. Education and ability without means were then, as now, rather discounted, and the position, either of secretary or chaplain in a nobleman's household, was that, as of many governesses of to-day, of an upper servant. There is little virtue in the opinion that complete subjection is an excellent discipline for a proud character. It frequently causes a complete recoil upon itself of such a temperament, and so it was with Swift. Sunshine and affection were the two things needful just then for his development; fate had done enough to break his spirit, and Temple all unwittingly added to the harshness of fate.

"I have plucked up my spirit since then," he pathetically tells Stella later. "Faith he spoilt a fine gentleman."

Probably many a "fine gentleman" was spoilt by the needless recriminations and thick-skinned lack of perception evinced by the average patron. There have however been exceptions to this tactless treatment of dependants, as in Hobbes' tutorship at Chatsworth, and Swift's Secretaryship in the Berkeley

household, which were marked by equality of intercourse between patron and servant.

For Temple to have treated a dependant on a footing of equality would have been for him to have been guilty of a social innovation, against which his essentially cautious soul would have rebelled; and though his secretary was a connection of his, through his wife, the force of this relationship was not enough to persuade him to make a personal friend of the young man. He could not help regarding him as, at least, rather sullen and unresponsive. It is no wonder then, that the secretary at present held the position of upper servant in the household at Sheen, probably having as his abiding place a small ghost-haunted room in the servants' quarters, with sufficient space for the bare necessities of life, including, perhaps, a rough shelf for the few books which were one of his greatest treasures. No doubt the spirit left by Swift to be added to those encountered by his own, was known in the astral world as a complaining and discontented brother. Nor is it difficult to imagine the small room re-echoing in the dark hours of night to the gloomy complaints and angry recriminations against Fortune which this proud character uttered, as a reaction from the submission and unfailing obedience, expected from him during the day. A mind like his is not, however, satisfied with itself as sole audience. It must summon a greater public, and must therefore express its thoughts that a greater public may read and understand. Thus Swift turned to writing. His early

works are, however, noted chiefly for their correctness of style and metre rather than for any other qualification. They are the work of a young writer who has not yet dared to give rein to his power, but is still afraid of himself. Perhaps, however, they served the purpose of attracting Sir William Temple's notice.

At the time when Swift joined him, Temple was living in a self-imposed retirement at Sheen. "Self-imposed" is however too strong a word, for a character which lives by negation does not impose laws on itself. It is a vacuum. Its morals are those left by a temperamental "vacuum-cleaner." Such are those of Temple. He was too cold to work, too cold to play, too cold to feel emotion, too cold to avenge injuries, too cold to be loyal, too cold to be disloyal. He was a moral Iceberg. It is a singular fact that he played Jacob to Dorothy Osborne's Rachael for seven years, and married her at the end of that period, in spite of the two unpleasant factors of scandal and smallpox. The purity of his life has never been questioned, but perhaps the purity of silver in a mould is not difficult to preserve. Yet let it be said of him that during the seven years of probation, and during his married life, his faithfulness never wavered. Perhaps no wind shook it; perhaps no violent gust stirred the surface. Whatever it may have been, he remains to be handed down to posterity as an example of, what shall we call it—Virtue? in a dissolute and immoral age.

Much vapid abuse of Temple has been chronicled

in history. He was not a proportionate nonentity, he was not a nonentity at all. He achieved success by those qualities which were inherent in him, tact and courtesy. He was no giant, neither was he a dwarf. He did not aspire to great things, neither did he achieve them, and he may thus be classed with the majority of mankind. He hit the happy mean, and is therefore not open to blame.

At the age of sixteen, he left Cambridge without having acquired either reputation for, or love of, learning, and two years later proceeded to travel on the Continent. During this tour he met with Dorothy Osborne, the daughter of an ardent royalist.

Dorothy Osborne, or as she became later, Lady Temple, is one of the most charming and interesting women of history. She does not attract by vicious brilliance, nor does hers form one of the series of beautiful portraits of the women of this age. Her claim to fame must be based on a cultured mind, a thoughtful disposition, a charm and dignity of character combined with the qualities of womanliness and purity, so little found, and so much to be desired both in the eighteenth century and in this. A history of her life and character would form one of the most desirable text-books to be placed in the hands of schoolgirls. Her letters to Temple, written during the seven years which they had to wait for the consent of their parents to their marriage, form a delightful commentary on the manners and morals of her age, and at the same time throw into high

relief her own beauty of character and deep-seated goodness of soul. A mutual attraction drew these two together at their first meeting in the Isle of Wight, where she saved her party from an awkward *contretemps* with the Governor, and after that their affection continued to grow till it deepened into the love of a lifetime. Temple, as a son-in-law, was regarded with disfavour by Sir Peter Osborne and his wife. They looked on him as a young man of unsettled character, changeable disposition and uncertain views. Sir Peter Osborne could not tolerate the lack of enthusiasm in the young man; Lady Osborne had more practical reasons for rejecting him. He was not wealthy enough to be a suitor for her daughter's hand, and there were other and worthier men in the background, who were ready to come forward on the slightest encouragement. Sir John Temple also had higher views for his son. Thus the course of their love was greatly impeded and their correspondence for years had to be carried on in secret, to escape the untiring espionage of a tyrant brother, against whom Dorothy had perforce to defend both herself and her lover. When Fate moreover had overcome all their objections, Dorothy was seized with an attack of small-pox, so that her beauty had, for the most part, disappeared when she was at last able to be married to Temple in 1654.

Lady Temple curiously enough disappears from history after her marriage, save as the mother of Temple's children and the intimate friend of the

Queen, whom she survived only two or three months. As a companion to Temple she was eclipsed by his sister Lady Giffard, who lived with them after her husband's death and supported and advised Temple in all his political undertakings. It is possible that the woman's mind behind the scenes of the political stage, may have held Temple from undertaking unnecessary risks, for a woman, unless she is a born speculator, has an eye only to the small gains of life, and will sell her soul for half its value, provided she receives a temporary advantage in cash down. If this is the case it is easier to understand Temple's pre-eminently cautious mind. The early years of their married life were spent by the Temples in Ireland, in Sir John Temple's house, where the son passed his time in writing verse translations and essays. These earlier works show no real literary value, their sole importance is the part they played in forming his later style, which is that of a gentleman. Perhaps this is enough to say of it. His life in Ireland did not arouse any broad feelings of sympathy. His attitude to Ireland is that of the ruling class, and he looks on the Irish as entirely responsible for their own misfortunes, an outlook which must of necessity preclude all sympathy. Possibly this had its effect on Swift, who constantly reiterates his hatred of the Irish, and whose mind, in those early days, in spite of his supreme independence of character, must have received some colour from Temple's prejudices.

Temple's life in Ireland seems to have been

thoroughly congenial to him, though farming, gardening and light-verse writing were perhaps strangely quiet occupations for a young man to choose.

Ireland was certainly not the place for him to display his talents. He therefore came to London with letters of introduction from the Duke of Ormonde, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, to Clarendon, who was at the head of affairs, and to Henry Bennett, Lord Arlington, who was Secretary of State. Temple, in accordance perhaps with those qualities which write him down time-server, did not press his suit with Clarendon, whose influence he could see was on the wane. Arlington's star, on the other hand, was at its brightest. He was pre-eminently the useful politician, he could play the wise man with the wise, and fool in the presence of fools. Hence he was calculated to be a successful member of society. His usefulness was the characteristic which especially appealed to Temple at this critical period of his career, and moreover Arlington was essentially the man to help newcomers. He was not possessed by the useless notion that new blood must be bad blood, and he was ready to lend a helping hand to Temple, who came to him armed with very strong recommendations. His promises to Arlington were quickly rewarded by a commission of some importance.

The affairs of England were at this time in an unfortunate condition. Her trade at home was in a state of suspension owing to the plague. Abroad she was a power without any important ally. She



was at war with the United Provinces, which were governed by John de Witt, a statesman of no ordinary ability, fully capable of carrying on war successfully. France had taken the side of the States General and Spain was hostile.

The only help that England could look for was from the Bishop of Münster, who at this time was anxious to give her active help against the Dutch. The English agent had therefore to repair to Münster to arrange matters and Temple was chosen for the post. Though the negotiations came to nothing, the business was satisfactory for Temple, and he returned to England with a reputation for tact and diplomacy, which immediately secured him a baronetcy and the appointment as English resident at the viceregal Court of Brussels.

The real contest lay between the permanent advantage of England and the temporary benefit of Charles II., whose interests were to be found in the support of the Catholic, wealthy and unscrupulous King of France, while the interests of England rested in an alliance with the Dutch. At this time, however, Louis was definitely on the side of the Dutch and could not join with Charles. A Stuart attempt at unity was made in 1667 in the Conference of Breda, when England and the Dutch came to terms in the so-called peace of Breda, while Charles made a second treaty with France on the terms that England must make no convention with the house of Austria that year and that Louis must support all Charles' designs in or out of the kingdom. No arrangement contrary

to each other's interests was to be made by either during the year, and Louis was to have a free hand in the Spanish Low Countries. Temple, following the policy of Arlington, was on the side of the Dutch, and a permission, granted him to travel *incognito* in the Netherlands, enabled him to become acquainted with De Witt, which gave them the opportunity of discussing calmly the position between England and the United Provinces, with the advantage that both sides could receive unbiassed discussion untrammelled by the subterfuges and intrigues of the King. Temple's sympathies were wholly on the side of the Dutch against France, and he now sketched the plan of a close alliance between England and the Republic which was to compel Louis to hold his hand. It seemed as though this alliance was the one thing required to establish the affairs of England both externally and internally. It was hoped that by this the power of France would be bridled and England restored to the same place in Europe which she had held under Cromwell. Indirectly it was expected to reinstate Charles in favour with Parliament and enable the Ministry to recover from the late war.

The result of the discussion with De Witt was the formation of the Triple Alliance between England, the United Provinces, and Sweden, completed by Temple when he was finally called in to conclude the arrangements as England's representative. The importance of the Triple Alliance for us here, with its final completion, in the Peace of Aix la Chapelle, signed in 1668, is simply the light which it throws on

Temple's character. Macaulay says of it that it was the one eminently good act performed by the Government between the Restoration and the Revolution. The importance, even the advisability of it, for England, is a doubtful point. With regard to Temple it is of the utmost importance. Laying aside the consideration of it from the point of view of statesmanship, for Temple, who was entirely without the gambling spirit, cannot be considered a statesman in the real sense of the word, it may be taken, together with the rest of his dealings with De Witt, as a monument to his powers as a diplomatist. For the time it was the cause of universal approval and raised Temple's reputation to an enormous extent. The Duke of Ormond writes to him : "The success of your negotiations gives no man greater satisfaction for the part you had in it than to me. The happy consequences which may reasonably be expected from the conclusions of the treaty may extend further and last longer than I have had time, since I received yours of the 24th inst., to consider. I confess my first reflections were upon the good effect it will have at home, and the good humour it is likely to put the Parliament in at their first meeting, which I look upon as the foundation of all the other advantages to be derived from it, by reputation, and all the good effects of that amongst our neighbours."

Perhaps three other letters written with respect to the treaty, form an interesting commentary on it as affecting Temple. An official communication from the States to the King puts the matter thus :—

“It is merely in compliance to custom that we do ourselves the honour to write your Majesty in answer to the letter that you were pleased to send us relating to Sir William Temple; for we can add nothing to what your Majesty has seen yourself of his conduct by the success of the Negotiations committed to his charge. As it is a thing without example, that in so few days three such important Treaties have been concluded, so we can say that the address, the vigilance, the sincerity of this Minister are also without example. We are extremely obliged to your Majesty that you are pleased to make use of an instrument so proper for confirming that strict amity and good intelligence which the Treaty at Breda had happily begun. And we are told to say that if your Majesty continues to make use of such ministers the knot will grow too fast ever to be untied, and your Majesty will ever find a most particular satisfaction by it as well as we.”

This letter must have been received by Charles with extreme satisfaction during the negotiations which he was then carrying on with France; and also the following letter from M. de Witt to Lord Arlington:—

“MY LORD,

“As it was impossible to send a Minister of greater capacity or more proper for the temper and genius of this nation than Sir William Temple, so I believe no other person either will or can more equitably judge of the disposition, wherein he has

To His Grace  
Narcissus, Lord Primate of  
all Ireland—  
By His Grace's

most obedient  
and...most

humble servant

The Publisher.

This book was in Davitt's hands  
in 1808 see His Early Days of Swift,  
p. 37 & was found by G. M. L. Oct. 4,  
1897

SWIFT'S HANDWRITING DISCOVERED IN HIS EDITION OF  
TEMPLE'S WORKS



found the States to answer the good intention of the King of Great Britain. Sir William Temple ought not to be less satisfied with the readiness wherewith the States have passed over to the concluding and signing of these treaties, for which he came hither, than they (the States) are with his conduct and agreeable manner of dealing in the whole course of his negotiations. It appears, my Lord, that you thoroughly understand men, and bestow your friendship only upon such as deserve it, since you cause persons to be employed who acquit themselves so worthily. I think myself happy to have negotiated with him, and that by his means your Lordship has been pleased to give me a new testimony of your good will."

Temple's own contribution is to the following effect:—

"After the conclusion of the Triple Alliance and the Peace of Aix, I was at an end of my ambition; having seen Flanders saved as if it had been by one of the miracles the House of Austria has, they say, been used to, and the general interests of Christendom secured against the power and attempts of France; and at the same time the consideration and honour of his Majesty and his crown abroad raised to a degree it has not been in for some ages past, and we had no reason to expect it should be in some time to come, upon the decline it felt after the business of Chatham and the Peace of Breda that succeeded it."

Temple rightly said that he had reached the height of his ambition ; we will add power, for, alas ! for the vanity of human wishes, Charles two years later signed with France the Treaty of Dover, in which all that had been done by the Peace of Aix was overthrown. And with what was the negotiator of that much acclaimed Peace occupied ? In imitation of the simple character of the Romans, he was growing cabbages in the country. He had by this time reduced life to its lowest terms and was prepared to emulate the slugs on his own cabbages. "For," he says, "to say the truth, I am very well as I am, being of so dull a complexion that I do not remember any station or condition of life I have been in these dozen years which I have not been pleased with and a little unwilling to leave."

Once more he was summoned from his retirement at Sheen to extricate the King from the meshes in which he perpetually entangled himself, to negotiate a second treaty with the United Provinces. His services in bringing about peace were recognized in an ambiguous way by the offer of the Secretaryship of State. But he resolutely declined it. Perhaps his own statement later best explains his position. "Upon three days' thought of this affair," he says, "I concluded it a scene unfit for such actors as I knew myself to be, and resolved to avoid the Secretary's place, or any other public employment at home, my character abroad still continuing.

"The Elections were canvassing for a new Parliament, and I ordered my pretensions as they came



to fail. In the meantime I deferred my entering the Secretary's place till I might likewise enter into the House of Commons, which both his Majesty and Lord Treasurer were satisfied with, though not Lord Sunderland. But when that Parliament was chosen and I not of the House I represented to His Majesty how unfit it was to have a Parliament meet without his having a Secretary in the House of Commons, and how useful Mr. Coventry would be to him there."

Thus Temple the diplomat escaped temporarily from the responsibility that he dreaded.

Before however he could complete the negotiations with the Dutch, he was recalled to England, where affairs were sufficiently disastrous to require the services of a demigod. The nation had lost confidence in the Ministry and the Ministry in themselves. The sole remedy proposed by Temple was to alter the Constitution of Government by changing the form of the Privy Council. The change which he proposed was entirely inadequate in character, moreover it defeated its own ends and only provided the King with a further means of tricking his ministers. Yet, like Temple's other schemes, it served the purpose of increasing the favour with which he was popularly regarded. The prorogation of Parliament allowed him to retire to Sheen once more, though he was summoned to London almost immediately by the report of the King's illness and the arrival of the Duke of York. He found that on all sides he was made the scapegoat, and,

disgusted with the treatment which he received, he took the earliest opportunity of retiring once more. A succession of irregular acts on the part of the King still further estranged Temple, and his own disinclination to make any definite side with regard to the Exclusion Bill roused the hostility of the King against him. This was definitely shown by the exclusion of Temple's name from the list of Privy Councillors. Probably the real cause of this was Charles' disappointment in discovering that the stainless name which he had hoped would give an external whitewash to the Government, did not have that effect.

At any rate, Temple now found himself fully at liberty to retire permanently to Sheen, and he lost no time in retreating to his beloved country, where he was left undisturbed by politics, until, in the reign of William III., he was again summoned to the front, and once more entreated to accept the Secretaryship of State. Once more he refused, and henceforth his part was that of a passive spectator of politics and personal friend of the King. His quiet life at Sheen was interrupted by the death of his son, an event which plunged the Temple family in such grief that they left Sheen and retired to Moor Park in Surrey. We are inclined at this juncture to write an epitaph on Sir William Temple, were it not that he probably considered that his real life had begun. Presumably he did not, like others of her children whom Fortune has cast off, fiercely ejaculate, "Put not your trust in Princes nor in

any child of man," and then turn his attention to the Deity. Neither Prince nor Deity was to him of sufficiently absorbing interest. A contemporary criticism says of him: "He reveres the Sovereign (and no man perhaps ever testified by so elegant a bow), he admires the Prince of Orange; but there is one person whose ease and comfort he loves more than all the princes in Christendom, and that valuable member of society is himself, Guilelmus Temple Baronettus. One sees him in his retreat, between his study-chair and his tulip-bed, clipping his apricots and pruning his essays, the statesman, the ambassador no more, but the philosopher, the Epicurean, the fine gentleman and courtier at St. James' or at Sheen, where in place of kings and fair ladies he pays his court to the Ciceronean majesty or walks a minuet with the Epic Muse and dallies by the South wall with the ruddy nymph of gardens."

Perhaps it may be said of him that he satisfied that greatest critic of all, his own conscience, and lived up to the only standard that is of any consequence, that one set up by his own moral character and intellect. If he disregarded that self-satisfied Nemesis, public opinion, he is not to blame. If he did not look down the vistas of the future to meet half-way the one-sided, half-ignorant recriminations of posterity we cannot therefore write him down indifferent. To use a meaningless phrase, accepted by the ignorant, he had the courage of his convictions, whatever they were. A confession of disappointment is the only possible opening for the

brimstone-tipped fingers of the righteous, with their devil-inspired maxim, "I told you so," but from Temple himself we get no such confession. Lady Gifford, the constant companion of his successes and misfortunes, writes of him: "His political memories were clouded by an ever-present sense of disappointment. His humour had become very unequal from cruel fits of spleen and melancholy. His temper, naturally bad, was kept in uneasy subjection by sheer force of will. An exact observer of nice points of honour, he was ill-apt to make allowances for the deficiencies of others; liable to strong dislikes which he only concealed with difficulty; and kind to his inferiors solely because he thought it his duty to be kind to all men. In a word, a man capable of making a favourable impression on chance visitors, but a trying companion to his familiars, and an ungracious patron towards those unfortunates who might have to stand to him in the relation of dependents."

Undoubtedly his secretary found him trying, and the feeling was reciprocated, though a sincere friendship grew up later between Swift and his patron. Swift must have been fully conscious of the irritating likeness between Temple and his surroundings, and the complacent suitability of the creature to its habitat. Temple thus describes his much-loved estate at Moor Park:—

"It lies on the side of a hill (upon which the house stands), but not very steep. The length of the house where the best rooms and of most use and pleasure are, lies upon the breadth of the garden. The great

parlour opens into the middle of a terrace gravel walk that lies even with it, and which may be, as I remember it, about three hundred paces long, and broad in proportion. The border set with standard laurels and at large distances, which have the beauty of orange trees and flowered fruit. From this walk are three descents by many stone steps, in the middle and at each end into a very large parterre. This is divided into quarters by gravel walks and adorned with two summer-houses, and the sides of the parterre are ranged with two large cloisters, open to the garden upon arches of stone, and ending with two other summer-houses even with the cloisters, which are paved with stone and designed with four walks of shade, there being none other in the whole parterre. Over these two cloisters are two terraces covered with lead and faced with balusters, and the passage into these two walks is out of the two summer-houses at the end of the first terrace walk. The cloister facing the south is covered with roses, and would have been proper for an orange-house, and the other for myrtles and other more common greens, and had, I doubt not, been set for that purpose, for this piece of gardening had been then as much in vogue as it is now. From the middle of the parterre is a descent by many steps following on each side of a grotto that lies between them (covered with lead) into the lower gardens, which is all fruit trees, ranged about the several quarters of a wilderness which is very shady. The walks here are all green, the grotto embellished with figures of shell rock-work and

water-works. If the hill had not ended with the lower garden, and the wall were not bounded by a common way that goes through the Park, they might have added a third quarter of all trees, but this want is supplied by a garden on the other side of the house which is all of that sort, very wild and shady, and adorned with rock-work and fountains. This was Moor Park when I was first acquainted with it, and the sweetest place, I think, that I have seen in my life, either before or since, either at home or abroad. What it is now I can give little account, having passed through several hands that have made great changes in garden as well as in houses, but the remembrance of what it was is too pleasant ever to forget, and therefore I do not believe to have mistaken the figure of it which may serve for a pattern to the best gardens of our manner, and that are most proper for our country and climate."

Perhaps Temple's standard of life is best expressed in his own words: "The measure of choosing well is whether a man likes what he has chosen, which, I thank God, has befallen me, and though among the follies of my life building and planting have not been the least, and have cost me more than I have the confidence to own, yet they have been fully recompensed by the sweetness and satisfaction of this retreat, where since my resolution taken of never again entering into any public employment, I have passed five years without ever going once to town, though I am almost in sight of it, and have a house there, always ready to receive me. Nor has this been

any sort of affectation, as some have thought it, but a mere want of desire or humour to make so small a remove."

He takes a gently satirical view of life: "When all is done, human life is, at the greatest and the best, but like a froward child, that must be played with and humoured a little to keep it quiet, till it fall asleep and then the care is over."

This point of view, however, to the seriously youthful mind of Swift must have appeared callous. A mind must have comprehended in its grasp the wide issues of life, whether it be at twenty or at fifty, to see in it what it really is, a game of chance and comedy of errors. Temple had done this, and he emerged from it the dignified semi-philosophical, rather pompous old man of Moor Park. He was sixty years of age when Swift came to live with him in Surrey, and, as was natural, was surrounded by a halo of political achievements and success in the past. His secretary could not therefore fail to admire this winner of victories, though, at the same time, he must have seen the hollowness of the shrine at which he was expected to worship.

After a year's residence with the Temple family he was ordered to Ireland for change of air, and on Temple's recommendation, obtained an insignificant post from Sir Robert Southwell. It appears that he had already begun to suffer from the disease which became to him a perpetual torment. In his ignorance of all medical knowledge he ascribed it to eating "unripe fruit." To this date may be ascribed the

beginning of his pedestrian habits. In order to obtain enough exercise he used to run up and down a hill behind the house every two hours. A year sufficed to restore him to health, and he returned to Moor Park. His return to Moor Park was followed by the appearance of new life in the chrysalis. This new life took the form of that discontent which by the possessors of it is called "divine." Whatever is the source of it, it generally denotes life in the discontented. It is not difficult to imagine Temple greeting this new element with some alarm. Probably he took to himself at this juncture, that privilege of which the middle-aged think they have the sole monopoly, of being rude to the young, and acted as a further irritant to Swift's already excited mind. The life in the household of this cultured man of letters with his wide acquaintance with the great ones of the world, after the life as a schoolboy and the son of an obscure mother in sordid surroundings, was enough to effect a seismic disturbance in the most commonplace temperament. Since change of surroundings came to Swift just at the time when he had begun to realize his own potentialities, it was of almost incalculable importance to him, and guidance at this juncture would have been of invaluable assistance. This moment occurs in the lives of most of us, and its importance is most frequently disregarded by those who have in their hands the shaping of youthful lives. Temple no doubt looked on it as an aggravation of the disagreeable qualities of his secretary, and did not take the trouble to discover its meaning.



He probably took for granted, together with many other guardians of youth, that a moral somersault was necessarily bad, and acted on this assumption. The moment of temperamental revolution is, as a rule, considered by the orthodox the auspicious moment for planting a club-foot on the toe of the revolutionary. Needless to say this is not the time for the would-be instructor to assert his own personality.

Temple, however, was wise enough to recognize Swift's possibilities, and recommended him to the King, so that when, in 1692, Swift took his B.A. and, later, M.A. degree, admitted *ad eundem* from Hart Hall, Oxford, there was a definite stipulation made that he should not take Holy Orders until he received a prebend from William. Temple, perhaps, was slow to further his interests. Swift certainly thought so, and suspected Temple of trying to reserve his secretary's attainments for his own purposes. He met the King twice, and the first occasion was the time of the much-repeated anecdote of the asparagus, when King William is said to have taught Swift the Dutch method of eating asparagus, stalks and all. This was so much appreciated by the economical mind of Swift, that, later in life, he insisted on one of his guests doing the same, to the intense disgust of the guest; an instance, as the friend pointed out, of Swift's extraordinary power over the minds of others. His second meeting with the King in 1693 was more important, though not perhaps fraught with all the possibilities with which Swift credited it.

Temple wished to influence the King with regard to the Triennial Act and sent his secretary to state his point of view. Swift, in spite of the knowledge of history of which he boasted later, was unable to make William accept his opinion, and returned to Moor Park much disappointed. Though he had failed in his mission, and it was probably a great blow to his opinion of his own powers as a diplomatist, yet the King at this time promised him royal patronage, and his visit gave him a personal acquaintance with the court and a sight of those men and manners which were afterwards to form his daily environment. It is possible, too, that he himself attracted some attention. The contrast between the dignified frequenters of the court and the raw country youth of whom we are told "he was of humble appearance and unpractised manners, but whose strongly marked features and piercing blue eyes indicated a nature of no common type," must have caused some slight sensation, and possibly those early characteristics of his were remembered by those with whom he came in close contact later. Yet, though the King's promises came to nothing, the fact of the mission was of importance because it points to Temple's increased appreciation of Swift's services and ability.

From this point, moreover, dated Swift's early literary efforts of any importance, chief of which were an "Address to Sir William Temple," an "Ode to King William," and, later, a poem, "On the Recovery of his Patron from Illness." These early works contain personal references and echo his discontent

with his surroundings and the hopelessness of his prospects. He took, however, a more decided step in asking Temple for a definite promise of support in the clerical profession. This Temple declined to give, for, as Sheridan has it, "Sir William was apprehensive Swift would leave him, and upon some accounts he thought him a little necessary to him." Besides, he could not bear the thought of Swift leaving him till he had a corrected copy of all his writings. The result was a violent quarrel between the secretary and patron, followed by Swift's departure from Moor Park. Temple, in his fear of losing him, offered him an employment in the office of the Rolls in Ireland, with about £100 a year. Swift replied that "since he now had an opportunity of living, without being driven into the Church for maintenance, he was resolved to go to Ireland to take Holy Orders." He appealed to the Irish ecclesiastical authorities for ordination, but found, to his chagrin, that he must have some sort of recommendation from his former employer. His pride, therefore, had to receive another fall in a request to Temple for a testimonial to his character. It would be interesting to compare the two documents, the one written four years earlier to Sir Robert Southwell, and the other written at the close of this period of residence in the Temple household. Temple seems in this case to have been thoroughly sincere in his support of his secretary, for Swift was admitted for ordination, and presented by Lord Capel to the prebend of Kilroot near Belfast, a small and very

dull country living worth £100 a year. This episode is perhaps typical of the whole of Swift's later career. His policy of waiting for favour and promotion was never followed by favourable results. It was only when he took matters into his own hands that he obtained what he wanted. His own effort was followed by success in this case as in others. Yet, though he had ostensibly achieved what he wanted, he was not yet satisfied. He found the life in the country intolerably dull after his life at Moor Park. Intercourse with the political world was, perhaps, life to him. Ambition, which was frequently of necessity at war with his devotion to the Church and his recognition of his clerical office, began now to assert its sway. His confession to Pope, though possibly ironical, yet was, to some extent, true: "All my endeavours from a boy were only for want of a title and fortune, that I might be used like a lord by those who have an opinion of my parts." He became dissatisfied with the country life. Moreover, he was disappointed in a more romantic way. He received a temporary rebuff in a love affair, which had now been of some duration. Miss Waring, or "Varina" as he called her, was the sister of a college friend of his, and she had hitherto shown a good deal of affection for him. He had found her, in fact, a consolation for the deprivation of the society of Miss Betty Jones of Leicester, who had won his earliest affections. He and Miss Waring had gone so far as to agree to marriage, when Swift's prospects should improve. It appears that the lady became

impatient at this juncture, and an impassioned correspondence was the result. Swift, the cold-hearted, swore an eternal love for her, and apparently offered to sacrifice everything for her sake. She, however, was obdurate, and we cannot help feeling disappointed that Swift's first and only *inamorata* was a lady of so mercenary a disposition that she could now decline to encourage him because of his lack of prospects, and later, when promotion was granted to him, she could offer herself as his wife. Perhaps, therefore, we cannot pity her for the stern yet tasteless rebuke which was administered to her later by her former lover.

A year after the presentation to Kilroot, the death of Lady Temple deprived her husband of a constantly sympathetic companion. Her loss, perhaps, caused him to realize in himself the advance of years and the need of some support, for he wrote to Swift inviting him to come back as a companion and secretary. This request was considered by Swift an honour, for the quondam servant was now to be on a footing of equality with his former master. He had no hesitation in accepting, and he now entered on a new phase of existence as Temple's chosen companion in his literary projects. There is an interesting anecdote, told by Sheridan, in connection with Swift's resignation of his living. "He (Swift) said, that soon after he had come to this determination, he was taking his customary walk, and met an elderly clergyman riding along the road. After the usual salutation he fell into discourse with him : and was so pleased with what

passed between them, that he invited him to dinner and easily persuaded him to be his guest for a day or two. During this time Swift found that he was a man of great simplicity of manners, good sense, some learning, and unaffected piety. And upon inquiring into his circumstances learned that he had only a curacy of forty pounds a year, for the maintenance of a wife and eight children. Swift lamented his situation, and told him that he had some interest which he would exert in his behalf, and endeavour to procure him a living, if he could only lend him his black mare to carry him to Dublin, for Swift was not at that time possessed of a horse. The clergyman readily consented, and went home on foot, promising him to meet him at any time he should appoint on his return. Swift went to town and represented the poor curate's case to his patron in such strong terms as soon prevailed on him to consent that Swift's living should, upon his resignation, which was proposed at the same time, be made over to him. . . . Swift, having despatched this business, returned as soon as possible to the country and gave notice to the old clergyman to meet him. He found him at his door on his arrival, and immediately upon their going into the parlour put the presentation into his hand, desiring him to read it. Swift said that while he was doing so, he kept his eyes steadily fixed on the old man's face, on which the joy of finding that it was a presentation to a living was visibly expressed: but when he came to that part of the writing which mentioned the name of the living, and found that it was Swift's

own which he had resigned in his favour, he looked at him for some time in silence, with such a mixed emotion of astonishment and gratitude in his countenance as presented to Swift one of the most striking pictures of the mind expressed in the face that he had ever seen, and he said that he never before had felt such exquisite pleasure of mind as he did that hour. Nor is this to be wondered at, since it was the first opportunity he ever had of letting loose that spirit of generosity and benevolence whose greatness and vigour, when pent up in his own breast by poverty and dependence, served only as an evil spirit to torment him."

Temple was at this time engaged in taking an active part in the contest between the Ancients and the Moderns, which had spread to England, and he had written the "Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning," which, in spite of a polished correctness of style and perfection of literary grace, is so full of errors in fact and judgment that it cannot be considered important. The dispute has been treated at some length in a later chapter, so that there is no need for further reference here, than to Swift's active partisanship on the side of his patron, which resulted in "The Battle of the Books," the successor in his literary achievement to the "Tale of a Tub," which was already written. Various literary works were produced, too, at this time by Temple's pen, chief among which was perhaps his "Essay on Gardens," which was an estimable production. His historical works have been voted as inaccurate and of little

value from the point of view of history. More need not be said of them. Temple's value as a writer lies simply in his polished style, careful diction and clearness of thought. His works were carefully edited by Swift after his death in 1699. His sole recognition of his secretary's services was a legacy of £100 and the posthumous publication of his work, a legacy which meant five years' unceasing trouble, little profit, and constant disputes with Lady Giffard. Swift apparently showed no bitterness of spirit against Temple, though at the close of ten years' service, having reached the age of thirty years, he had obtained no position and had still to make a way for himself into the difficult and ambiguous arena of political advancement. What profit had these thirty years been to him? They had been to him an excellent preparation for his after-life. They had provided for him exactly what was most essential. He had received what every one should be grateful for until they have reached this age, before which no one should be allowed to enter the public arena; he had been carefully and deliberately kept in the background, and by a process, unpleasant perhaps to a domineering character, had been enabled to think, to comprehend life with its wide issues, and to plan out for himself a possible course of action and method of existence; an opportunity which is absolutely invaluable to those who wish to do great work later. If Society would recognize the advisability of some sort of *Purdah* for members of both sexes under thirty, many difficulties would be avoided, and the



number of unnecessary societies would be materially diminished.

Swift's education had, to a great extent, been carried on on negative lines. He had discovered the value of strenuousness and vigour by seeing the want of it in his patron. He had imbibed a dread of lack of principles and of a definite aim in life. The effeminateness produced by luxury, the softness of character resulting from the enervating influence of the perpetual peace of velvety lawns and sunny garden walks, the qualities of the political peacock, were alike hateful to him. No wonder that truth and sincerity became his ideal, and, through a lack of discrimination, from which his character always suffered, the abuse of these virtues was frequently mistaken for their use. He had begun to understand the grammar of politics and to know how far his own ability tended in this direction. He knew also the undercurrent of political ideals, if they can be dignified by this title. The theory of the social order was familiar to him, the ways of those whom he considered his superiors were no closed book. He had had the advantage of the society of good women, which was important because, no doubt, from their characteristics he built up the high standard which he always maintained for a woman throughout his life. Not the least important was the friendship which had been begun with Esther Johnson, then a girl of fifteen or so, which will be treated fully later.

We can, perhaps, say of him that he had the grammar of life at his finger-tips when he entered

the big school which the majority enter when they have barely learnt to read.

To this period belongs a list of somewhat eccentric resolutions, which was found after his death, among Swift's papers. It may be as well to keep them in their original form.

#### RESOLUTIONS WHEN I COME TO BE OLD

1. Not to marry a young woman.
2. Not to keep young company, unless they really desire it.
3. Not to be peevish, or morose, or suspicious.
4. Not to scorn present ways, or wits, or fashions, or men, or war, etc.
5. Not to be fond of children.
6. Not to tell the same story over and over to the same people.
7. Not to be covetous.
8. Not to neglect decency or cleanliness, for fear of falling into nastiness.
9. Not to be over severe with young people, but to give allowances for their youthful follies and weaknesses.
10. Not to be influenced by, or give ear to, knavish tattling servants, or others.
11. Not to be too free of advice, nor trouble any but those who desire it.
12. To desire some good friends to inform me which of these resolutions I break or neglect, and wherein, and reform accordingly.
13. Not to talk much, nor of myself.

14. Not to boast of my former beauty or strength, or favour with ladies, etc.

15. Not to hearken to flatteries, or believe I can be beloved by a young woman; *et eos qui hæreditatem captant, odisse ac vitare.*

16. Not to be positive or opinionative.

17. Not to set up for observing all these rules, for fear I should observe none.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PROSKÊNION

LET us stand beside Swift as he waits to be admitted on to the great stage, to which he aspires. We see a surging chaos, the elements of what is to be conflicting with the elements of what has been. As far as one can apply the term to any period, the eighteenth century was an age of new things. Yet if any one had yielded to slumber in the days of Horace, and become once more awake in the eighteenth century, would he have been much astonished when he came to understand English Society and manners? Possibly not. Philosophers have it that there is, and can be, nothing new, and one must be struck by the resemblance of our society in the eighteenth century to that of the age of Maecenas. Politically it is the age of an oligarchy of favourites, of the intellectual influence of women in party politics, of fevered attempts of monarchy to assert a personality which no longer exists. From a literary point of view it is the age of the interest of man in himself. Morally, it is the age of superficiality. Socially, it is the age of an intellectual aristocracy.

It was no wonder, then, that a young man of Swift's ambition determined to enter the arena where he saw that the laurel would be accorded to ability, rather than to birth. The age of the politician has succeeded the age of the courtier, and with this comes the opportunity for those qualities which pre-eminently adorn the man in the street. The cabal, with its antagonism between courtier and politician, marks the transition stage. In Shaftesbury and Clarendon we have the politician *quâ* politician. The graces of the Stuarts are giving way to the practical business qualities of the House of Hanover; the halo surrounding monarchy vanishes in Georgian powder: imagination disappears with a gasp of indignation.

From this period politics assume an alarming proportion in the affairs of the day, and with politics comes the inevitable cheapening of certain things which hitherto have been valued at a high rate. Literature must always be the reflection of the age. With the beginning of party politics, of perpetual civil warfare, comes a new kind of literature, that which is based entirely on the elements affecting human life, with an intensely living, practical meaning. It must have in it also the character of that speed which marks the details of human progress, leaving the slow growth of principles to another class of writers. An inevitable division comes in the literary world, for the writer of every day, whose productions are of merely transient value, has no time to add depth, or an inner meaning to his work,

which affects surfaces alone. The twenty-four hours of his day do not suffice for metaphysics, for pictures, for elegancies of style. His thoughts must not be more durable than the paper on which they find expression. Hence we have the rise of journalism. Journalism, as it first appears, however, is on a different basis, and contains different elements from those of its later development. It is a two-headed prodigy, consisting on the one side of a class of political writers expressing themselves in political pamphlets, who wish simply to lead public opinion to one party or another, on the other, of a class of writers who wish to affect public opinion in more lasting matters, morals, economics, and the social order. These find expression in the newspapers which now, for the first time, take their place in literature. The opinion of the people, which, in our twentieth century is perhaps a Cerberean hobby-horse, begins to have its value in the eighteenth century, and is to be guided, as far as may be; won, it must be.

Hence we have a period of intensely human interest, of active literary and political gossip. It is not yet the age of great conversationalists, nor of letter writers, but everyday gossip is glorified into a system. The coffee-house becomes the centre of literary and political interest. Here we have the regular meetings of the wits of the age, of the shining lights of the political world, of those writers who find in these everyday meetings excellent copy for their newspaper articles. Surely Addison and

Steele found in some of the regular frequenters of either Moll's or Will's coffee-house, the models for some of their world-famed characters in the *Spectator*. It is no great step from the regular meetings at these popular houses to the more definitely organized club, and of these many grew up in quick succession, as the Kit Kat Club, the October Club, and later, the Brother's Club. Some of these had more definite political interest than others, but all served the important purpose of disseminating the news of the day, whether political or personal.

From the point of view of parties they were significant, for some were frequented by Whigs, others by Tories. Any would-be politician had by means of these every facility for hearing discussed the imminent questions of the hour, and could form his opinion on them. Here politicians made their *début* before entering the great political world, and when once they had gained the *entrée* of a circle, they heard all the public gossip, learnt the trend of affairs, and acquired the grammar of statesmanship. As regular meeting-places they were the means of cementing friendships, and probably many of the celebrated men of this half of the eighteenth century looked back with gratitude to one or other of these coffee-houses as the birthplace of many a lifelong friendship. Though it is possible that we, feeling the need of some such institutions in our day, have overestimated their importance, yet it must be admitted that they supplied a much-felt want. That they were invaluable for writers there can be no

doubt. In many cases they served the purpose which is served now by the reviewer or critic. Here the author of works lately come out, and books were then frequently produced anonymously, could hear the general opinion of his work. Literary subjects received free discussion. In one or other of these houses Swift heard his works talked about, and great must have been his amusement on hearing the fruits of his labours ascribed to others, often to quite unsuitable authors. Introductions to men of importance in the literary world were thus easily obtainable, and though perhaps facility was given for literary charlatanism, those opportunities could not have been greater than they are now. Addison and his "little senate" have been handed down to ridicule by Pope's criticism, but we are tempted to think that by this means the eighteenth century was saved the publication of books of maxims and personal opinions, for the literary mind must in some way express its interest in itself. Moreover untrammelled discussion of literary work and projects among a sympathetic audience, bent on similar pursuits, must have been no small factor in the literary output of the day. Undoubtedly it must have been instrumental in the origin of the newspapers, the *Spectator*, *Tatler*, etc., as the names imply.

Thus an introduction to one of these literary circles implied an introduction to the whole of the literary world, and for the most part of the political one. Society was much smaller than it is now, the circle narrower, and though social barriers were



firmly fixed, and the division between the classes more marked, yet there was greater facility of entrance to the inner shrine. Journalistic ability admitted to the political world through literary circles, and the political world admitted to the Court. Here again in the narrow circle of the Court world there was room for ability. Perhaps half the group round the Queen was composed of rising men. Here again the transition from the house of Stuart to that of Hanover was clearly seen. Swift with his daring bluntness, lacking all the courtesies of life, was admitted. Addison, Harley, Steele and many others, claiming a right of way purely by their ability reached the height of their ambition. It is perhaps the inevitable consequence of government by a woman. Stern fighting qualities appeal most to the woman's mind and not the characteristics which are essentially those of the courtier.

The Queen is an interesting figure of her time. Her devotion to the Church is signalized by the benefaction known as Queen Anne's Bounty which meant a relinquishment of a large proportion of her income. She was endowed with all the spirituality of the Stuarts, and yet her personal economies and almost parsimonious tendency suggest the shop-keeping spirit of her successors. Hers was an essentially domestic government. The priest and physician held their own with the politician and courtier. Obstinacy in some cases was allowed to over-rule the saving common-sense and prudence which for the most part characterized her, and thus

Swift's so-called attack on the Church in the "Tale of a Tub," of which she failed to see the true import, was enough to prevent her from recognizing and rewarding his life-long service to that religious foundation of which he was as keen a supporter as she was herself. Undoubtedly, however, another element entered in here. The Queen was influenced to a great extent by a succession of women favourites, and Swift in his poem "The Windsor Prophecy" had attacked the Duchess of Somerset, who at that time was the reigning power. This was enough, and an opinion of Swift, never to be eradicated, was implanted in the Queen's mind by the enraged Duchess. With a Queen on the throne the influence of women tends to become paramount, and this was especially the case in the reign of Anne. While in previous ages the effect of women on politics had been the indirect result of personal beauty, it now became the direct result of women's interest, arising from their intellectual fitness to take their part in business involving wide issues.

With the age of Anne we have the beginning of an entirely new type of woman, the intellectual woman, who concerns herself in politics and expresses her opinion of them and other things in writing: there is a small circle of letter-writers, including Lady Mary Wortley Montague, Mrs. Delany, and Mrs. Manley, who also writes political satire, an unusual weapon in the hands of a woman. The excess of a virtue must inevitably ensue in this case as in all others, and there is even now some suspicion of the

blue-stocking element, though there is as yet no real danger to be feared.

Besides the small number of intellectual women there is a set of women of great social importance, the Duchess of Marlborough, Duchess of Somerset, and Mrs. Masham, and of less importance, though of greater social influence, Lady Betty Berkeley, Lady Betty Germaine, and others. Besides these there was a smaller circle of women who held the stage by their beauty alone, women sometimes of humble birth, the toasts of the Clubs, among whom was Mrs. Anne Long, and probably Esther Vanhomrigh.

To these various circles Swift, by degrees, gained the *entrée*, and to him, probably, other ladies besides Esther Vanhomrigh owed their education. Swift's position among them was perhaps unique in those days, though common enough in our own time. We are inclined to forget the existence of his priestly orders until a reason is required to account for his untrammelled friendship with women. As a friend of Mrs. Vanhomrigh he gained the *entrée* to her household, as chaplain to the Berkeley family he became acquainted with Lady Betty Berkeley and her intimate friends; for the rest priestly orders and a bullying disposition probably accounted for his circle of woman worshippers. Many little anecdotes are told of his intercourse with women. Perhaps little trust may be placed in these, though we are inclined to believe the story of Swift's compelling one lady to sing in spite of tears and protestation. He was no doubt looked upon by the husbands of many society beauties as a

salutary educational force, for he was allowed to exact a submission which would in no way have been granted to the husbands, and the most palpable rudeness on the part of Swift was passed over, almost rejoiced in. An extraordinary psychological perception enabled him to place his finger on the weak spot in the character of his women friends, and they must perforce know themselves beaten from the first hour of their acquaintance with him. In only one instance, that of Esther Vanhomrigh, did his treatment fail, though, on the other hand, probably neither to her nor to Stella did he pose as the overbearing, almost brutal tyrant, which was his favourite character among ladies. Stella's superiority necessarily commanded respect, and though Swift loved to play with her as with a child, yet to her as a woman, he offered the unfailing courtesy of a knight. He understood his women friends as they are seldom known by men.

In this description of Swift among the circle of women we are anticipating, but it was necessary to point out the characteristics of the society on which he was fully prepared to enter, without a tremor as to his own unfitness, filled with the courage lent by a consciousness of power and capability of achievement. *Carrière ouverte aux talents* was perhaps the keynote of this period. Swift had reached the age of thirty-two, when a man begins to understand his own possibilities, when the emotional enthusiasm of youth is replaced by mature consideration and practical outlook on life: when the mind begins to grasp in one

momentary flash actualities, together with their causes and effects. To return to our former metaphor, he resembled an enormous and shapeless duckling in a most impotent shell, and he now stood forth with the fragments of the shell, lying about him in confusion. His appearance was that of an ungainly and badly dressed parson, entirely deficient in manners, fully conscious of his own superiority to the rest of mankind, both mentally and practically; possessed of an intellectual force, urged by a moral impulse to impress himself on the world. He knew, as all others possessed of a sense of vocation know, that he was necessary to his world and that he had been given powers which must be used for the good of his fellowmen. It is a trite commonplace that the place of each one would be filled equally by another. It is certainly untrue in the case of a man like Swift. He was the man for his time and he knew it, therefore he allowed the small things of life to slip by unheeded, while he pressed on to the goal which throughout his life lay before him. He was an idealist, as all those who achieve must be, and at the end of his life he looked back and saw what all idealists must see, broken threads, potsherds, glass burnt to blackness in the furnace, and like others he died dissatisfied. All honour to his dissatisfaction.

On Sir William Temple's death, Swift found himself possessed of two unsubstantial emoluments, a small legacy and a promise of advancement from the King. This promise was not fulfilled, and he

had perforce to accept the post of chaplain to Lord Berkeley, one of the Lord Justiciars of Ireland. Two disappointments were to be his, one of a secretaryship and the other of the Deanery of Derry, before he received the living of Laracor in Ireland, which, together with two other livings, brought him an income of a little over £200 a year: this paring of the lion's claws no doubt made his teeth the sharper when he was enmeshed in the net of a small country living. The internal rumblings and tearing at the net must be left to the imagination. It must have been intensely disappointing, though, no doubt wiseacres would add, excellent discipline for his soul, to find all his energies thus cramped and limited, when he was expecting to find an open plain on which to exhibit his full strength. That his feelings were hurt we have evidence in his treatment of a lady at this time. His course of action also points to the fact that he did not mean domestic cares to fetter his movements when he should be at length allowed to move in that bigger world for which he knew he was intended. Miss Waring having heard that he was in a position to marry, at once wrote to him demanding his fulfilment of an earlier promise. Probably Swift regarded this as the climax to his misfortunes. His early love for her had entirely disappeared, and his character was such that no mere sentiment would be allowed to thwart his imperious will. His reply was rude and coarse, and would have effectually checked the aspirations of the most devoted lover.

He was thus free to devote himself to the work of his parish, and this he carried out with the most immaculate punctiliousness. There are a good many reports of practical jokes in connection with his performance of his duties. At Laracor probably he instituted the rigorous system which he followed later in the discharge of his ecclesiastical duties. In this he was far in advance of his time, and it points to a seriousness in his conception of the duties of a parish priest which was quite out of the common. Here we have another instance of the extreme conscientiousness which marked every phase of his life. The regularity of mind which led him to impose on himself the severest possible system in all his out-goings and in-comings, moved him to hold daily service in his parish church, a custom which he never gave up, and to administer the Sacrament with extreme regularity. No detail of his work in connection with his parish or church was allowed to escape, and the whole was surmounted by a most careful administration of the revenues which went through his hands, and which were in every case managed in such a way that all profit arising from this administration fell to his successors rather than to Swift himself. That he had a very high conception of the duties of his order is evident from all his writings on the subject of the clergy. His "Letter to a Young Clergyman" is full of the most sound advice and might be read by clergymen of the present day with much profit both to themselves and their

parishioners. It is a significant fact that it was a question of Church revenues which first brought Swift on to the political stage, and it is perhaps illustrative of the whole of his political outlook. He did not allow his feeling of irritation to interfere with his duties, though he must again and again have thought with a good deal of impatience of his congregation of fifteen, and had he not been endowed with a saving sense of humour he must have suffered considerable annoyance at the fate which befell him, as it befalls many country parsons of our own time, of reading the service with his clerk as sole audience. Possibly the humorous side of the affair was sometimes too much for him. No doubt the story is a true one of his beginning the exhortation with the words "Dearly beloved Roger." It is a slight instance of the faculty, quite unrestrained, of carrying a joke to its logical conclusion sometimes regardless of taste.

About this time, at Swift's instigation, Esther Johnson and her companion, Mrs. Dingley, followed him to Ireland. He advocated this for financial reasons, though no doubt the gossips attributed it to other motives, and probably both Swift and Stella met with some unpleasantness in consequence. In spite of this, however, Swift must have found it a considerable alleviation of his lot, and the bonds of the friendship, always a close one, were from this time daily strengthened until more than twenty years later Stella's untimely death brought to an end the intercourse of a lifetime. The daily companionship



with these two ladies no doubt contributed to win for Laracor the attachment which Swift began to feel for it. It formed for him what the word "home" now implies for most people, an occasional residence and resting-place, for his interests lay in the wide field of London and the Court.

The termination of Varina's love-affair followed closely on Swift's appointment as chaplain to the Berkeley family. His connection with them has been immortalized by two productions, "The Meditation on a Broomstick" and the "Petition of Mr. Frances Harris." The latter of these, which was developed later into "Advice to Servants," is a masterpiece in its expression of the psychological understanding of the servant's mind. There is an interesting and amusing story in connection with the former, told by Sheridan. "In the yearly visits which he (Swift) made to London during his stay there, he passed much of his time at Lord Berkeley's, officiating as chaplain to the family, and attending Lady Berkeley in her private devotions. After which the doctor, by her desire, used to read her some moral or religious discourse. The Countess had at this time taken a great liking to Mr. Boyle's Meditations, and was determined to go through them in that manner: but as Swift had by no means the same relish for that kind of writing which her ladyship had, he soon grew weary of the task: and a notion coming into his head, resolved to get rid of it in a way which might occasion some sport in the family; for which they had as high a relish as himself. The

next time he was employed in reading one of these Meditations, he took an opportunity of conveying away the book and dexterously inserted a leaf, on which he had written his own 'Meditations on a Broomstick': after which he took care to have the book restored to its proper place, and in his next attendance on my lady, when he was desired to proceed to the next Meditation, Swift opened upon the place where the leaf had been inserted, and with great composure of countenance read the title 'A Meditation on a Broomstick.' Lady Berkeley, a little surprised at the oddity of the title, stopped him, repeating the words "'A Meditation on a Broomstick!" Bless me, what a strange subject! But there is no knowing what useful lessons of instruction this wonderful man may draw from things apparently the most trivial. Pray tell us what he says about it.'

"Swift then, with an inflexible gravity of countenance, proceeded to read the Meditation, in the same solemn tones which he had used on delivering the former. Lady Berkeley, not at all suspecting a trick, in the fulness of her prepossession, was every now and then, during the reading of it, expressing her admiration of this extraordinary man, who could draw such fine moral reflection from so contemptible a subject: during which, though Swift must have been inwardly not a little tickled, yet he maintained a most perfect composure of features, so that she had not the least room to suspect any deceit. Soon after, some company coming in, Swift pretended some business, and withdrew, foreseeing what was to

follow. Lady Berkeley, full of the subject, soon entered upon the praises of those heavenly Meditations of Mr. Boyle. 'But,' said she, 'the doctor has been just reading one to me, which has surprised me more than all the rest.' One of the company asked which of the Meditations she meant. She answered directly in the simplicity of her heart, 'I mean that excellent "Meditation on a Broomstick."' The company looked at each other with some surprise, and could scarce refrain from laughing. But they all agreed that they had never heard of such a Meditation before.

"'Upon my word,' said my lady, 'there it is; look into that book, and convince yourselves.' One of them opened the book, and found it there indeed, but in Swift's handwriting, upon which a general burst of laughter ensued, and my lady, when the first surprise was over, enjoyed the joke as much as any of them, saying, 'What a vile trick has that rogue played me! But it is his way, he never balks his humour in anything.' The affair ended in a great deal of harmless mirth, and Swift, you may be sure, was not asked to proceed any farther in the Meditations." It is, perhaps, one of his finest short pieces, and may be inserted here.

"This single stick, which you now behold ingloriously lying in that neglected corner, I once knew in a flourishing state in a forest; it was full of sap, full of leaves and full of boughs; but now, in vain does the busy art of man pretend to vie with nature, by tying that withered bundle of twigs to its

sapless trunk. It is now, at best, but the reverse of what it was, a tree turned upside down, the branches on the earth, and the root in the air. It is now handled by every dirty wench, condemned to do her drudgery, and by a capricious kind of fate destined to make her things clean and be nasty itself. At length, worn out to the stumps in the service of the maids, it is thrown out of doors, or condemned to the last use, of kindling a fire. When I beheld this, I sighed, and said within myself, *surely, mortal man is a broomstick!* Nature sent him into the world strong and lusty, in a thriving condition, wearing his own hair upon his head, the proper branches of this reasoning vegetable, until the axe of interference has lopped off his green boughs, and left him a withered trunk: he then flies to art, and puts on a periwig, valuing himself upon an unnatural bundle of hairs, all covered with powder, that never grew upon his head; but now, should this *our broomstick* pretend to enter the scene, proud of those birchen spoils it never bore, and all covered with dust, though the sweepings of the fairest lady's chamber, we should be apt to ridicule and despise its vanity. Partial judges that we are of our own excellencies, and other men's defaults!

“But a *broomstick*, perhaps you will say, is an emblem of a tree standing on its head; and pray, what is man but a topsy-turvey creature, his animal faculties perpetually mounted on his rational, his head where his heels should be, grovelling on the earth, and yet, with all his faults, he sets up to be an

universal reformer and corrector of abuses, a remover of grievances, rakes into every street corner of nature, bringing hidden corruptions to the light, and raises a mighty dust where there was none before, sharing deeply all the while the very same pollution he pretends to sweep away: his last days are spent in slavery to women, and guarding the least deserving: till worn to the stumps like his brother besom, he is either kicked out of doors, or made use of to kindle flames for others to warm themselves by."

Lady Berkeley and her daughter were always firm friends of Swift, though from Lord Berkeley perhaps he received less kindly treatment. Yet the connection with this family proved very useful to him, for he thereby received introductions to two important people, the Duke of Ormond, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whose daughter, afterwards Lady Ashburnham, became a great friend of his, and Lord Pembroke, who succeeded the Duke of Ormond. In 1701 Swift took the degree of Doctor of Divinity at Trinity College, Dublin, and a few months later went with the Berkeley family to England. From this time, perhaps, dated the fascination which London had for him throughout his life. In the visit which he had paid to the Court as Sir William Temple's secretary had no doubt originated his love for London, but from now the city became the mistress of his soul, his steps turned thither involuntarily, and compulsory absence was looked upon as exile. The metropolis in our day, with its seething populace and strong human

interest, has its fascination for the practical soul, and it no doubt had a similar attraction for Swift, though perhaps the Court, where the affairs of Kings and the great were at stake, formed his true centre. His pleasure lay in guiding the actions, not the souls of men, and the ambition, which was inherent in him, though kept under strong control, found here a satisfactory playground.

About this time he obtained through Congreve, an old school-fellow, the *entrée* to the literary political society in which he was meant to be a leader. It served him, moreover, as a stepping-stone to the great world to which he aspired. As the "mad parson" he first attracted notice in the coffee-houses. Sheridan tells an interesting anecdote. "The knot of wits used all this time to assemble at Button's coffee-house, and I had a singular account of Swift's first appearance there from Ambrose Phillips, who was one of Mr. Addison's little senate. He said that they had for several successive days observed a strange clergyman come into the coffee-house, who seemed utterly unacquainted with any of those who frequented it, and whose custom it was to lay his hat down on a table, and walk backward and forward at a good pace for half an hour or an hour without speaking to any mortal or seeming in the least to attend to anything that was going forward there. He then used to take up his hat, pay his money at the bar and walk away without opening his lips. After having observed this singular behaviour for some time, they concluded him to be out of his senses; and the name



WILLIAM CONGREVE  
 1695-1729



LORD BERKELEY  
 1687-1735





that he went by among them was the 'mad parson.' This made them more than usually attentive to his motions, and one evening as Mr. Addison and the rest were observing him, they saw him cast his eyes several times on a gentleman in boots, who seemed to be just come out of the country, and at last advanced towards him as intending to address him. They were all eager to hear what this dumb mad parson had to say, and immediately quitted their seats to get near him. 'Pray, sir,' said he, 'do you remember any good weather in the world?' 'Yes, sir,' was the reply; 'I thank God I remember a great deal of good weather in my time.'" 'That,' said Swift, 'is more than I can say. I never remember any weather that was not too hot, or too cold, or too wet, or too dry, but, however God Almighty contrives it, at the end of the year 'tis all very well.'"

No doubt this incident served to give Swift an introduction to the world of wits, and it was but a slight step to the world of politics.

## CHAPTER III

### IN THE BLAZE OF THE FOOTLIGHTS

THERE is nothing more dazzling, nothing which more completely shuts off outer existence, than the glare of the footlights. We are inclosed in a small community of our own while the bigger world can see and criticize all our movements. Thus Swift, moving in an inner circle where there were a thousand living and virile elements, remained unconscious of that keen scrutiny to which all his actions were exposed. We must play the part of the spectators, trying, as far as may be, to understand his motives and consequent actions, remembering that the perspective is altered for us, that we, from our vantage-ground, must see things as Swift did not see them. In this inner circle, to the threshold of which he had just achieved the *entrée*, Swift perceived everything that he valued—ecclesiastical and political preferment, a reception and practical use for his literary talent, and friendship with men of intellectual and moral power equal to his own. Among them were numbered Congreve, then at the height of his intellectual power and achievement; Addison, who had so far

only set foot on the first rung of the political ladder ; and Steele, who had only lately discovered that in journalistic art lay his true vocation.

It is interesting to note that Congreve's services were afterwards fully repaid by Swift by an introduction to Harley when Congreve, his name almost forgotten in the literary world, was in reduced circumstances. Congreve, though of Yorkshire extraction, owing to his father's employment was brought up and educated in Ireland, meeting Swift at the Kilkenny Grammar School. The study of law for which he was intended did not appeal to him, and after an attempt at novel-writing he tried dramatic work. The *Old Bachelor*, his first play, met with almost unparalleled success and secured for him a Government post. The flame of genius quickly blazed and as quickly died. The course of his dramatic success was short, for his last play, *The Way of the World*, was acted just eight years after his first, and from that time, though only a little over thirty, he remained a hanger-on in the literary world. At the same time he was regarded as a final authority in things literary, and received the homage of the young writers of the day. The controversy with Collier, in which Congreve conducted a vigorous defence of the stage, had done much to strengthen his authority and position. No doubt many of the literary beginners looked on Congreve as their father in Apollo, for his maturity was an early one ; Steele made him patron of his "Miscellany," and Pope inscribed to him his "Translation of the Iliad." Like

others, however, Congreve was led away from the shrine of the dramatic Muse to the temple of practical politics, and ended in gentle dabbling what might have been a brilliant career. He always remained in favour with the Whigs, without assuming a hostile attitude to the Tories, but naturally, he met with little reward for so lukewarm an advocacy. Dr. Johnson with the utmost scorn tells us that Congreve treated the Muses with ingratitude, and accuses him of the weakness which to that worthy would be the lowest depth, of wishing to be considered a gentleman rather than a man of learning. The full meaning of this accusation is understood by those fully versed in eighteenth-century manners and customs, where the names "gentleman" and "wit" were mutually exclusive terms. Congreve's career, for its extraordinary promise and premature decay, was remarkable. It is unnecessary to comment further on it; he is of importance here solely as the medium of Swift's introduction to politics, and as one more example of Swift's widespread benevolence and unfailing gratitude for services rendered to him.

It is interesting, however, to study his career side by side with that of Addison, the most important of the circle round Swift at this juncture. He and Congreve were dramatically opposed; Congreve brilliant, unstable, born to momentary success which he was at no pains to achieve; Addison slow, painstaking, of a plodding nature, born to a lasting success, based on the stable footing of perseverance and

capacity for knowing his opportunity and seizing it. His career at Oxford was singularly successful, and his reputation as a man of letters, following on the publication of several works, chief of which was his account of the greatest English poets, introduced him by name, at any rate, to other writers. He had, moreover, a capacity, most practical in its results, of writing adulatory verse, which soon brought him into favour with the foremost Whig politicians of his time, Somers and Montague. Their favour secured for him what was invaluable to a man of his ability, a pension of £300 a year, which enabled him to travel for four years and complete his literary education. It was lucky for him that he had secured this favour at the hands of the Whigs, for on his return to England in 1703, they had been succeeded by the Tories, and his fortunes sank to the lowest possible depth. His party's need of some means of centralization found its expression in the formation of the Kit Kat Club, which consisted of thirty-nine prominent Whigs. Addison was elected member soon after his return to England, and thus maintained a close connection with his party. He was enabled shortly afterwards to further the interests of the Whigs by his poem, "The Campaign." This resulted in his appointment as Under Secretary of State, a post which, however, on the fall of the Earl of Sunderland in 1708, was taken from Addison to make room for a Tory successor. He was soon provided with other work, as Secretary to Lord Wharton, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and during his tenure of this office cemented

with a firmness never to be seriously shaken, the friendship with Swift begun in 1705, a year after the publication of the "Tale of a Tub."

To any one studying Swift from a superficial point of view, he appeared at that time to be wholly Whig in sympathies, and thus he and Addison met on common ground in politics. Mutual respect alone is the element which gives stability to friendship, and thus Swift maintained for Addison a lasting affection in spite of a change of politics. To use Swift's words, Addison was the "most honest" man of his time; to borrow Addison's encomium, Swift was the "truest friend, and greatest genius of his age." These are strong testimonies in the mouths of perhaps the two most sincere characters of the reign of Anne. Each probably was attracted by the sincerity of the other, and found in the other an intellectual companion, though, no doubt, Addison often gazed open-mouthed at the brilliance of the star which far outshone his own. Addison's claim to literary fame was based on a graceful prose style and excellency of scholarship. His dramatic works, *Rosamund*, an opera, and *Cato*, a tragedy, cannot be classed among great dramatic achievements, nor can his poetry be seriously considered. Both were entirely lacking in originality, without which both poetry and the drama must be lifeless husks. It is, however, as a journalist and originator of the character sketch that Addison achieved distinction. The originality lies, perhaps, in the conception rather than in the treatment of the characters of the *Spectator*.

The introduction of a personal element into the Essay is an entirely new feature of English literature, and with this the Essay begins to assume that character which remains its permanent attribute in its later development in the work of Charles Lamb and other nineteenth-century writers. This form of writing has, moreover, a historic value in the fact that it forms the basis of the character novel.

A period in the life of a nation which takes as its motto, "The proper study of mankind is Man," must perforce find some personal mode of expression, and Addison, happily for his literary name, was the first to strike this note. Once more we are compelled to notice the depressing resemblance between literature and trade, that only that man succeeds who strikes the keynote of his century and follows up the initial victory in close pursuit. Without implying anything derogatory to Addison's literary genius, this fact must be remembered in ascribing to him this great achievement. His work receives sufficient recognition in the statement that those characters in the *Spectator* were his which will live so long as our literature endures, and that it is due to him that the characters whose author was Steele, were frequently pruned by Addison's more cultured hand, so that they too are a lasting monument. Papers by Addison also appeared in the *Whig Examiner*. The rest of his work was comprised in the *Freeholder*, and other Whig newspapers which he conducted with much success, the *Old Whig*, one or two pamphlets, and a play, *The Drummer*, which met with a cold reception.

His political career ended in an eleven months' tenure of the Secretaryship of State, which he apparently resigned with some alacrity, rejoicing in the leisure thus afforded him for literary work. His death, however, occurred a year later in 1719, by which the Government felt probably that one of its strongest and most steadfast supporters was removed, for Addison had throughout been thoroughly honest and conscientious to his political convictions. He was diametrically opposed in character to Steele, who was a friend both of Addison and Swift, and, curiously enough, quarrelled with both, being, no doubt, gifted with a lack of stability not uncommon to the literary character.

Steele is one of the most fascinating characters of the circle. He possessed all the charm and grace of character which Addison lacked, except in a literary sense. He combined the courtesy and undaunted ardour of the military character with the quick wit and active imagination of the literary genius. His experience of life and his own irregularities, perhaps many in number, made him a sympathetic companion and writer. While Addison's characters in the *Spectator* were drawn from the coffee-house, Steele's were drawn from a wider world. His laughter is the laughter of the whole human race, and his tears are the tears shed by all over common griefs and failures. As a lover he was perfection, as a father ideal, as a husband he failed, merely through a lack of capacity to meet his bills. No one could have been more devoted to "Dear Prue," who, we



are tempted to think, must have been most exacting. We would linger over this side of Steele's life, read again and again those charming love letters written to his wife after their marriage, hear once more the story of all his little acts of self-denial to furnish her with the necessities of life, for he was capable of every form of self-denial, except one, the all-necessary one of curbing his own reckless and impulsive spirit. Unfortunately it is our lot to study Sir Richard Steele the journalist, rather than Dick Steele the lover. It must not be forgotten that Steele was not the originator of journalism; that laurel must always be given to Defoe, whom Steele succeeded in this branch of literature, though to Steele must be ascribed the foundation of that class of newspaper of which the *Tatler*, started in 1709, was the first example. This, as its name implies, was a paper of a more or less gossiping nature, in which the doings of every one were discussed in a running commentary on men and manners. It had, of course, political interest, and was a useful vent to the political, social, and moral opinions of those who wrote for it. Addison contributed one or two papers, though his best efforts were reserved for the *Spectator*, a paper on slightly different lines, which was started by Steele in 1711, in immediate succession to the *Tatler*. The *Spectator*, perhaps more than its predecessor, bore the character of censor, though at first its criticism was of a kindly nature. No more vivid picture of the life and morals of the eighteenth century is to be

found anywhere than in the papers of the *Spectator*. The censor assumes the character now of a man of position, now a distressed lady, now the man in the street, and all make their complaints in the form of correspondence to the paper, while the censor also reserves to himself the right of personal criticism in his own character. The friends of Sir Roger de Coverley are also allowed to make their commentary under the form of perhaps all the types of men frequenting the coffee-houses. Many of these papers were contributed by Addison; these are as a rule marked by a greater dignity and more telling force of style than those of Steele, but it is in the pathetic delineations of the poorer classes, of the failures in Society, that we recognize the hand of Steele. Addison frequently assumed the part of literary critic, and some critical papers, then considered valuable, on "Paradise Lost," and on Italian Opera, and other literary themes proceeded from his pen. In the autobiographical papers with their confession of weakness, with their expression of unfailing sympathy with human nature, and their wonderful feeling of the joy of living, we find Steele.

Unfortunately Steele allowed himself to use his paper as a means of recrimination against government, and finding his position consequently unsafe, he had to bring the *Spectator* to a close amid universal regret and sorrow throughout England. The *Guardian* was essentially political in character, though in it space was found for lighter writings, such as the poetry of Pope and, later, non-political

contributions by Addison. About this time took place the quarrel between Steele and Swift, the history of which is an unfortunate story of ill-justified recriminations and reproaches on either side. The *Crisis* succeeded the *Guardian*, and immediately following the birth of this paper came the fall of the Tory Ministry coincident with the death of the Queen. Steele's hopes of reward for his Whig writings were but slightly repaid by the new Government. The highest post offered to him during the remaining fourteen years of his life was that of Commissioner for Forfeited Estates in Scotland. His was not the character to succeed financially, he was too hot-headed to submit calmly to injury, too much lacking in tact to try to understand a momentary lapse of affection; altogether too warm-hearted for a cold-hearted and scheming world. He may be written down as one of the world's failures, as one of heaven's successes.

In mentioning Swift's quarrels with two of his greatest friends we have of necessity anticipated his own story. He had won their friendship at first purely on political grounds, by his authorship of the pamphlet entitled *Discourse on the Dissensions in Athens and Rome* in 1701, which was a protest against the impeachment, by the Commons, of the Whig leaders. This secured him the favour of Somers, Halifax, and Sunderland, though, as it turned out, it was a favour most superficial in character, fruitless in its results. Another opportunity occurred for his pen, in the twofold attempt to pass

the Occasional Conformity Bill against the Whigs, who included for the most part a vast body of Dissenters. Swift, perhaps fortunately for his position at the time, allowed the opportunity to pass, and the Bill was thrown out, leaving him still safely installed as a true Whig. A letter of his, written to Dr. King in 1703, throws light on the state of affairs at the time :—

“I wish you had been here for ten days, during the highest and warmest reign of party and faction that I ever knew and read of upon the Bill against occasional conformity. . . . It was so universal, that I observed the dogs in the streets much more contumelious and quarrelsome than usual; and the very night before the Bill went up (to the Lords) a Committee of Whig and Tory cats had a very warm and loud debate upon the roof of our house. But why should we wonder at that, when the very ladies are split asunder into High Church and Low, and out of zeal for religion have hardly time to say their prayers?”

Here was undoubtedly scope for the talents of the politician and writer, and Swift, by the publication of the “Tale of a Tub” in 1704 finally asserted his claim to a place among the foremost writers of his time. For the next ten years we see him in the forefront of the fray, raging like a caged lion during a temporary enforced residence in Ireland, thoroughly at his ease amid the fighting crowd, and never more gracious than when appealed to as an adviser, and honoured as the man who alone had a voice with

supreme authority. Some account must be given here of politics at the beginning of the reign of Queen Anne, in order that a strong and, we hope, fair light may be thrown upon Swift and his principles. So many charges have been hurled against him as turncoat, so many a sneer at him as political dupe, so many a jibe by the serious at his want of religion, that some explanation of the truth underlying all this period full of problems is undoubtedly called for.

The main distinction between Whig and Tory rested in the support by the Whigs of the Revolution and the Hanoverian succession, and, on the other side, of the Tory upholding of the doctrine of Divine Right and of the theory that the ruin of the Church meant the ruin of the State. Perhaps, so far as Swift is concerned, the latter tenet, that the ruin of the Church meant the ruin of the State, is the most important. It has been well pointed out by a recent writer that there is an essential difference between the Reformation in Scotland and in England. In the former country you have an attempt at the formation of a theocracy which has become familiar to us in the oft-quoted Miltonian phrase that new presbyter is but new priest writ large. Scotland, unrepresented in her Parliament, had voiced her grievances in her Church synods—while in England, where the parliamentary franchise was on a broader basis, the religious questions were discussed in the Parliament, and the result was that, so far as the English Church was concerned, it became Erastian. To touch the

Church therefore in the eighteenth century was to upset the whole working of the machinery of government, and to plunge the country into that chaos which, as the grandfathers of living men could remember, had cost Charles I. his head and had produced the Revolution of 1689. Order was essential, anything that produced disorder was destructive. Churchmen saw in Dissent the elements of disorder, for it was allied with free thought, even with atheism, and they banded together under a Tory banner, determined at all costs to uphold the Constitution of Church and State as by law established.

Further, a certain section were dubbed "High Churchmen," with a different signification from our own, because they were opposed to their Low-Church brethren. The latter, in doctrine, approximated to the Dissenters, and were, therefore, looked upon as possibly dangerous allies because they were on the down-grade, and might at any time enter into alliance with those whose forces made for disintegration, with its natural consequence, an upheaval of the Constitution. State and Church had become, in the eyes of the majority, one and indivisible. It was, perhaps, the last mighty effort to realize the mediæval dream with a reversal of the premier *rôle*.

In the "Sentiments of a Church of England man," written in 1704, Swift tried to prove to the Whigs that the Church of England was wide enough for the highest principles of civil liberty, and to the Tories that, in order to be a religious and God-fearing man, it was not absolutely necessary to be a Tory in politics.

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"The Church of England Man has both a true veneration for the scheme established among us of Ecclesiastical Government, and though he will not determine whether Episcopacy be of divine right, he is sure it is most agreeable to primitive institutions, fittest of all others for preserving order and purity, and under its present regulations, best calculated for our civil state. He should, therefore, think the abolishment of that order among us would prove a mighty scandal and corruption of our faith and manifestly dangerous to our monarchy ; nay, he would defend it by arms against all powers on earth, except our own legislature, in which case he would submit as to a general calamity, a death, or a pestilence."

To prevent the further eruption of Dissent, he thinks it only just that the State should give "all rewards of trust, profit, and dignity to those whose principles direct them to preserve the Constitution in all its parts." He shows that resistance by the Church saved the State from Rome, and thus confounds the illogicalness of the Dissenters.

Peace and order is the ideal set up by Swift.

"I think it clear that any great separation from the established worship, though to a new one that is more clear and perfect, may be an occasion of endangering the public peace, because it will compose a body always in reserve, prepared to follow any discontented heads upon the plausible pretext of advancing true religion and opposing error and superstition or idolatry."

The Church of England man is ready to adopt any form of government, to be ruled by one or by many, provided that the one or the many is the executive carrying out the laws passed by the whole—laws which cannot be abrogated save by the consent of the whole nation. For Swift, the magistrate whom it is unlawful to resist is the legislative, not the executive. The conclusion of this pamphlet illustrates Swift's attitude to political parties, and perhaps affords some clue to the reason why he failed to obtain ecclesiastical preferment.

"I should think that, in order to preserve the Constitution entire in Church and State, whoever has a value for both would be sure to avoid the extremes of Whig for the sake of the former and the extremes of Tory on account of the latter. I have an ambition to wish at least that both parties may think me in the right, which would be of some use to those who have any virtue left. But if that is not to be hoped for, my next wish should be that both might think me in the wrong—that would be a sure ground to believe that I have proceeded at least with impartiality and perhaps with truth."

Sincerity in politics was then, as now, an impossibility, and the impartial critic of either side was not likely to succeed, more especially if the vitriol of Swift's caustic sarcasm lent a black tip to his pen wherever principle was concerned.

To sum up the position of affairs, we have in the relation of Church to State an inverted mediæval doctrine, the State and the Church were one with



the State primus, and the Church, to use Mr. Sichel's words, "paid its tribute willingly to Cæsar." The majority of the Tory party, however, as was seen in the action of the Non Jurors, paid this tribute to the State as a whole, and not to the personal sovereign—to the Crown, not to the King.

This, however, is only one side of the question. It may be a truism to remark that religion begets principles, that the Church lends a stability to character, and in a wider sense to party, paradoxical though it may sound. Hence the Tories maintained as a grievance the adherence of the Whigs to a set of men rather than to principles. The Whigs were a "solvent in the State" rather than a consolidating force, and since they possessed an overwhelming majority in the House of Lords, they had shifted the balance of power from the Crown and Commons to that assembly. The result of the Marlborough and Godolphin administration had been to found an oligarchy.

The Tories, on the other hand, insisted that the Crown had a right to appeal from the Cabinet to the people, to influence ministerial deliberation directly by its presence; to appoint Bishops; to make peace or war; to issue Royal warrants; to dissolve Parliament; to approve or disapprove the choice of the Speaker. Again, the Tory party were urgent on Parliamentary reform, on the diminution of undue influence in election.

It seems remarkable that with convictions of this nature, the Tories should not have secured

earlier a larger majority. There was, however, that influence to be contended with which in England has perhaps been the moving power ever since the Hanoverian succession was established. The Whigs had on their side the monied class, a fact which, in a country of shopkeepers, gave them extraordinary weight and influence. As Swift says, "they were a bundle of faggots tied together by banknotes," which is remarkably strong as a temporary binding. At the same time it leaves individuals entirely at the mercy of their supporters, and there are few things more unstable than gold-washed patronage. It is therefore a little singular to find Swift at first on this side until we consider that his reason, which influenced his actions for the most part, entirely forbade agreement with the Tory theory of Divine Right, and that all his early life was influenced by the prejudices of Sir William Temple.

The monied class, moreover, had embarked on a big speculation in the war of the Spanish Succession, and were just now entirely satisfied with their managing director, Marlborough. He was anti-French and anti-Catholic, and intended to promote the colonial expansion of England. The Tories, moreover, were a divided camp—English Tories, French Tories, Hanoverian Tories, and Pretender Tories. The word "Pretender," moreover, was *anathema*, and this probably threw on to the Whig side many people who were Tory in sympathy, while those remained with the Whigs who intended to support the Hanoverian Succession.

The Tories, however, were equally sound on their side; they prided themselves on the fact that the Church had brought about the Revolution by resisting Papists and Dissenters, or, as Bolingbroke put it, had determined to keep a Presbyterian from being Mayor and a Papist from being King. In spite, however, of the good services which the Church had rendered to the Revolution, it had been neglected by the Whig party, and the bulk of the clergy were in the Tory camp. Whig principles and the majority of the Whig party were diametrically opposed to the Church, largely because the Dissenters and free-thinkers were to be found on that side, or as Swift said, "would pull down the present establishment of monarchy or religion as soon as any set of Papists in Christendom." It was because Swift felt this so keenly that in the period of his life at which we have arrived, we find him ready to enlist himself on the Tory side, and when the Government, on the appointing of Lord Wharton to the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland in 1709, sought to repeal the Test Act, in order, as Swift thought, to pander to the Dissenters and upset the settlement of Church and State in Ireland, the die was cast. He retired in disgust to Laracor, and from this point, that feeling of distrust of the Whigs which had been seething in his mind for some time became entirely subject to his convictions, which were on the Tory side. Let none therefore hurl the reproach of levity against Swift. No man remained more true to the principles with

which he set out, and few have risked more in support of conviction than he did.

He retired to Laracor, however, by no means in the character in which he had set out. The insignificant parson no longer existed. There had appeared before the public world a man who combined in himself the qualities of brilliant satirist and political writer unequalled for telling phrases and vitriolic wit, and withal a strong Churchman and defender of the establishment known as Church and State.

For some time he had been a marked man in Ireland, not the least for his extraordinary faithfulness to his clerical duties. He carried out in the details of practice, the theories expressed in his writings, and it was no doubt for these reasons, in spite of his character for lack of orthodox Churchmanship which he had achieved by the publication of the "Tale of a Tub," that he was chosen in 1707 to go to England on the business of the Irish First-Fruits. He was recognized as a man who could move men, and from this time begins the period of active influence when Swift was universally recognized as the most influential agent in the country.

"In the year 1707, moreover, Swift first laid public claim to the character of a humorist and a man of wit, by commencing an attack upon Partridge, the noted astrologer. His first tract on this subject was entitled, "Prediction for the Year 1708: wherein the month, and day of the month, are set down, the

persons named, and the great actions and events of next year particularly related as they will come to pass, and written to prevent the people of England from being farther imposed upon by vulgar almanac-makers: by Isaac Bickerstaffe, Esq." In this the first prediction is the death of Partridge himself. He says, "I have consulted the stars of his nativity by my own rules, and find he will infallibly die upon the 29th of March next, about 11 at night, of a raging fever, and therefore I advise him to consider of it, and settle his affairs in time."

In the year 1708 Swift published a second tract entitled: "The accomplishment of the first of Mr. Bickerstaffe's Predictions, being an Account of the death of Mr. Partridge, the almanac-maker, upon the 29th instant: in a letter to a person of honour." He there describes with inimitable humour Partridge's last illness, Bickerstaffe's visit to him, when he confessed that the latter's "Predictions" had worked so strongly upon his mind as to produce his present disorder; declares his ignorance and deceits, and dies repentant.

Partridge at length replied in a pamphlet, which has been falsely attributed to Mr. Rowe, entitled, "Squire Bickerstaffe Detected, or the Astrological Impostor convicted: by John Partridge, student in physic and astrology." This was followed by "A true and impartial account of the proceedings of Isaac Bickerstaffe, Esq., against me J.P." In the last of these Partridge exposes the ludicrous consequences attending the report of his death, the visits

of undertakers, grave-diggers, etc., and concludes with a furious denunciation against the Squire and France and Rome, all of whom he declared to be in conspiracy against him.

In 1709, Swift wrote "A Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaffe, Esq., against what is objected to him by Mr. Partridge in his almanac for the present year 1709; by the said Isaac Bickerstaffe, Esq." After humorously stating the attention with which the controversy had been treated by all the learned men of Europe, he proceeds gravely to prove that Partridge actually died within half an hour of the time he foretold, which he makes appear from the inconsistency of Partridge's own answers."

Swift published shortly afterwards an elegy on Partridge concluding with the following epitaph:—

"Here, five feet deep, lies on his back,  
A cobbler, star-monger, and quack ;  
Who to the stars in pure good will  
Does to his best look upward still.  
Weep, all you customers that use  
His *pills*, his *almanacs*, or *shoes* :  
And you that did your fortunes seek,  
Step to his grave, but once a week :  
This earth, which bears his body's print  
You'll find has so much virtue in't,  
That I durst pawn my ears 'tw'll tell  
Whate'er concerns you full as well,  
In *physic*, *stolen goods*, or love,  
As he himself could when above."





DEAN SWIFT  
FROM AN ENGRAVING IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, DUBLIN



## CHAPTER IV

### THE CRISIS AND THE CATASTROPHE

**I**T was on a Church question that Swift came into notice among the Whigs, and on a Church question he quarrelled with them, though his sympathies were not on the side of Ireland. The remission of the First-Fruits was dear to him because it meant an act of justice to the Irish Church, the amendment of a personal grievance, for the narrowness of Irish livings affected him personally, and it afforded him his first real opportunity of acting as spokesman on behalf of an important cause, the principle of which appealed to him very strongly. He was perhaps the more anxious to prove his capacity at this time, for he had already begun to feel the pernicious effects of his rashness in publishing the "Tale of a Tub," with a bigoted and unreasoning Churchwoman on the throne; and had failed to obtain the bishopric of Waterford which he knew ought to be his. The danger to the cause of the Church, moreover, was growing apace, for the Whig ministry was stronger than ever, and the risk which Swift ran with regard to his own prospects in promoting a Church question, no doubt added to the pleasure of doing so.

The First-Fruits paid by the Irish Church to the Crown amounted to some £3000 a year, together with the extra burden of collecting, which was both onerous and expensive. Irish Convocation had urgently pressed for their remission after the foundation of Queen Anne's Bounty in 1704, when the English First-Fruits were resigned by the Crown. It was not to be expected, however, that this would be conceded without a struggle. It was possibly a surprise to the Whig Government to find Swift so ardent an upholder of his mission. They were wise enough to recognize his sincerity, while, at the same time, they determined to keep his support by not rejecting his request entirely. The dismissal of Harley from office and the consequent resignation of the remaining Tories rendered Swift not less hopeful, and though, in 1708, he was allowed a personal interview with Godolphin, he could obtain nothing further than the promise of the remission of the First-Fruits in return for a repeal by the Irish Bishops of the Sacramental Test against Irish Dissenters. This naturally could not be conceded, as the Test Act was looked on by Swift, as by all Churchmen, as one of the main supports of the Church. No doubt the repeal of the Test was strongly advocated by the new Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, who was wholly antipathetic to Swift and his principles.

So far Swift had been unsuccessful. His hope of pushing this cause, through the favour of the party hitherto supported by him and now held in supreme

favour, was considerably lessened, and though he hoped for preferment, he must have felt that by advocating an adverse cause, he was risking his own chances of promotion. In accordance with this feeling he wrote to Dr. King, Archbishop of Dublin: "No prospect of making my fortune shall ever prevail on me to go against what becomes a man of conscience and truth, and an entire friend to the established Church." These words, so prophetic in their utterance, seem already to ring the death-knell of his hopes and ambition. If he could, for one moment, have sacrificed his principles to self-interest, his own cause would have been won, but this was impossible to him.

For the present he could do nothing further for the Irish Church, and he therefore turned his attention to writing. He found scope for his genius in the *Tatler*, which had been lately started by Steele, and he also published various pamphlets. The "Sentiments of a Church of England Man" has already been discussed as throwing light on Swift's Churchmanship, the others were the "Argument to prove the inconvenience of abolishing Christianity" and a "Project for the Advancement of Religion." All were written in support of Christianity, laying down the tenet that, from the point of view of common-sense alone, religion, as embodying an element of stability, was for the advantage of the nation. Swift, with other reformers, adopted the attitude that the present age was without precedent in wickedness, and the need of reform greater than ever before. The obvious

honesty of the writer had the result that some idea was mooted of building more churches. He took a further step in bolstering up the Church by his pamphlet written in the form of a "Letter to a Member of the English House of Commons," strongly urging the necessity of upholding the Test in Ireland.

Closely following on these three pamphlets came another abortive attempt to obtain the remission of the First-Fruits. It was declared that Swift's mission had been successful, but, to his chagrin, he had perforce to confess himself once more beaten, and once more to await his opportunity. A Whig attempt to mollify him was made by holding out to him the hope of a prebend of Westminster, though nothing came of it, and Swift, at the age of forty-two, found himself still as far from promotion as ever. Dis-satisfaction must by this time have been rankling in his mind, for, not only were his own merits meeting with no recognition from those whom he supported, but besides, all his principles were being ridden over rough-shod. At this time personal ambition and principles went hand in hand, though it was on the ground of principles that Swift left the party which in 1710 failed to obtain the support of the country. Swift left the Whigs before their downfall, and joined the Tories because they were ready to support the interests of the Church.

The fall of the Whig Ministry, however, closely followed another incident, the impeachment of Sacheverell, which was coincident with the fact that a changeable nation was growing weary of the war on

which they had entered with so great enthusiasm. Perhaps some slight summary of foreign politics at this point will render clearer the position of affairs for England.

The war of the Spanish Succession meant for England colonial expansion and an increase of commercial prosperity which coincided with her people's unrestrained passion for wealth and luxury. As Spain declined, owing partly to the struggle with England, and still more so to the failure of her people to rise to the situation, the struggle for the Trans-oceanic possessions, as far as England was concerned, was with the French. To prevent France from stepping into the Spanish treasure hordes was the object of the statesmanship of the eighteenth century. The possession of, or at any rate influence over, the Spanish Kingdom, because of its harbours, its sea-front, its sailor class, was the aim of the French monarchy. It was equally the object of England to prevent this at all hazards, and in that contest Holland was joined partly because she too was a maritime power, but more so because France as the successor of Spain might become mistress of the Spanish Low Countries. The war which has received the historical title "the war of the Spanish Succession" was in essence a Trade War, the first beginnings of that struggle with France for oceanic supremacy which resulted in the capture of Quebec and the battle of Trafalgar.

At first all went well, and England was called upon to rejoice over one great victory after another,

but as the monetary burden of the war became more and more heavy upon the English people, the whole nation, led by the country squire whose sympathies were on the Tory side, began to groan under the ever-increasing weight.

The hostility to the Whig ministry grew and came to a financial climax in the imposition of a new levied tax of 6s. in the pound. Prices rose; there was a scarcity of corn, and when Parliament met in 1709 the country was seething with discontent. Fuel was added to the fire when Parliament proceeded to the impeachment of Dr. Sacheverell in the winter of the same year. This action was meant to fall as a heavy blow on the Tory leaders. The result, however, for Government was that it furnished the opposition with a cause, and the cause with a martyr, and at this point began the downfall of the Whig ministry. Their action had touched the Queen on a tender spot, her highest susceptibilities had been wounded in an attack on one of the ministers of the Church. Moreover, she had for some time now resented the arrogant and overbearing behaviour of the Whigs, and was quite ready to look to other men to uphold her authority and maintain the interests of the country.

Sacheverell was the rector of St. Saviour's, Southwark, noted for his violent and truculent speaking. The immediate offence was a sermon preached in November, 1709, on the "Perils of False Brethren both in Church and State," in which, without impugning the Revolution, he preached the doctrine

of non-resistance, which led to the attack on him by Government, who wished to implicate the Church party with the High Tory party.

The plan of Government, however, did not succeed in the way they had intended. Sacheverell's sentence of three years' suspension set a howling mob at the heels of the ministry. He became the popular favourite, led a triumphant procession through the country, being saluted by peals of bells and decorated streets at Banbury, Oxford, Warwick, Shrewsbury, and Ludlow, as he proceeded to his country living in Shropshire. This acclamation was merely a sign of the times. The popular voice, as always happens, was the outward expression of the trend of circumstances. The country was at last awakened to the knowledge that they were being governed by an oligarchy under the guise of a limited monarchy, and that the attack had been made on Sacheverell by a small faction who intended to have the power in their hands, if need be at the cost of the country's prosperity and to the utter disregard of the wishes of the people. The dignity of the Crown, the safety of the Church and State were tottering ; the Queen's pride, moreover, was hurt by the presumptuous behaviour of the Marlboroughs, and Marlborough's inopportune demand at this juncture to be made Captain-General for life decided her on her course of action. The Whig ministry fell, and the Tories came into power. Harley became Chancellor of the Exchequer ; Sir Simon Harcourt, Attorney-General ; Rochester, Lord President ; Ormonde, Viceroy of

Ireland; and Henry St. John, Secretary of State, while at the next election in November, 1710, the Tories were returned with an enormous majority.

Swift must have received all these changes with mixed feelings. On his arrival in England, in September, to make one more attempt to obtain the remission of the First-Fruits, he was received by the Whigs with open arms. They were ready now to treat with him on any terms, to promise him anything. "The Whigs were ravished to see me, and would lay hold on me as a twig while they are drowning, and the great men making me their clumsy apologies." Godolphin, however, received him coldly, for which, perhaps in jest, he vowed vengeance to Stella. Their attempts at explanation were received coldly by Swift, who was too sincere to show a warmth which he did not feel. He was rightly hurt by their former treatment of him. "Rot them for ungrateful dogs; I will make them repent of their usage." But this resentment was only the expression of personal anger; it was not the cause of his change of party. If this had been the case he could have joined the Whigs again later, for they would always have been ready to receive on their side the active support of so invincible a pen. While he steadily refused all attempt at reconciliation with the leaders, he maintained his former friendship with Addison and his circle. He also contributed papers to the *Tatler*. He was advised to leave his mission in the background until "this hurry was a little over." He found himself in the middle of a great ferment, and



"was heartily weary of this town." He longed for his willows at Laracor. September 21st saw the fall of the ministry, and on October 4th he was introduced to Harley, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer. From this time he gave up all hope of his willows at Laracor, he was drawn into a seething whirlpool, from which there was no escape until he was thrown out as his turn came round. For four years he remained in the living, seething metropolis, himself the central figure of political activity. It is no exaggeration to say that he was the centre of this busy world. He came gradually to be looked upon as the intermediary between a lesser and a greater world, the pivot on which everything turned. We cannot forbear wondering at this point, Did this constitute happiness for Swift? The answer must be Yes, as far as happiness was in any way possible for an idealist, who always saw one height further than that on which he stood, or for an ambitious man of whom it is no reproach to say that he sought for some suitable recompense for his services. Do not we all seek for a return? The world is not built on a disinterested basis; the payment differs in kind, but we all wish for it. Therefore, if Swift was but human in this respect, must a reproach be cast in his teeth, because he stood on a pinnacle and demanded a reward to crown the citadel? Why should "ambition" be hurled at him as the crowning reproach? He was built on a massive plan, so, too, were his desires and emotions. He lived in a great world, while we, for the most part, live in a small one;

but let us not, therefore, play the frog to his bull.

The introduction to Harley led to relations with St. John, and by a careful use of the opportunity lent by the First-Fruits, Swift was won over to the Tory side. His mission met with immediate success, and Swift saw, to his extreme satisfaction, that he was at last to achieve that for which he had waited so long. Seventeen days after his introduction to the Tories, the remission of the First-Fruits was granted to Ireland, and Swift was bound to the Tories heart and soul. He was welcomed with the utmost warmth by the ministry; as they afterwards confessed to him, he was the only man they feared. They knew they had in him an invulnerable and efficient ally. None of their writers were to be trusted as they knew Swift could be; none held a pen which, like the music of Orpheus, could make the very stones turn. They wished for a pamphleteer who was absolutely proof against corruption, and they knew that in Swift they had found one. All the Whig efforts to reclaim him were from this time useless. He was at once admitted on terms of intimacy with the Tory leaders. "He (Harley)," he writes to Stella, "charged me to come to him often. I told him I was loth to trouble him in so much business as he had, and desired I might have leave to come to his *levée*; which he immediately refused, and said that was not a place for friends to come to."

He is delighted to find himself so much thought of. He stands already "with the new people ten

times better than ever he did with the old; forty times more caressed." Yet, at the same time, there is a slight feeling of distrust. "All this is odd and very comical; he (Harley) knew my name very well." A few months later the feeling has become certainty. "They call me nothing but Jonathan, and I said I believed they would leave me Jonathan, as they found me."

A quarrel with Harley over an offer of £50 in return for his services established Swift still more firmly with the Government, for they now saw more clearly the character of the man whom they had, somewhat lightly perhaps, induced to join their ranks, and admiration for his genius was now coupled with a compulsory respect. He had, moreover, written in October some verses entitled "Sid Hamet's Rod," in which he attacked Godolphin, the late Lord Treasurer, and shortly afterwards attacked Lord Wharton in a violent, though perhaps not slanderous, pamphlet. On both these grounds he was in high favour with Harley and St. John.

It is impossible to imagine two men more entirely opposed in character and attainments than Harley and St. John. For the one Swift came to feel the affection and respect for a friend whom he could meet on terms of equality, to the other he must always look up as to a superior, and though he admired St. John's brilliance, the fact of his superior genius was sufficient to deter Swift from the close friendship with him which he maintained with Harley.

There was, perhaps, between Harley and St. John

the same difference as between Addison and Steele, though in a different degree. Harley was a steady-going politician, without any of the qualities which make the statesman. Mediocre is the adjective which, perhaps, most aptly describes him. He came from the middle classes, and was eminently suited to be their idol.

He was an illustrator of the truth that mediocrity and conventionality are the necessary conditions of practical success. Greatness, in any sense of the word, was beyond his reach. The monumental qualities of Bolingbroke belonged to another world than that in which Harley moved. Brilliant strokes of policy which made up Bolingbroke's life were beyond the comprehension of Harley. Philosophy, as applied to politics, seemed to him worthless. Though steady routine, unshaken by chance, was his true environment, yet from the position in which fortune placed him he was compelled to hang on to the skirts of chance, and through not understanding her he lost her for ever. His claim to success lay also in the fact that he made few enemies. Brilliance and not mediocrity is the target for the malevolent, and thus it was fairly plain-sailing for Harley. He had also the gift of inspiring the deepest affection in men, and so had round him a circle of devoted friends—Swift, Arbuthnot, and others. He aspired to be considered the Maecenas of his time, and, himself no mean student, became the patron of writers and strong supporter of the wits of the day. In every case gratitude for benefits received from him deepened

into strong affection. In some cases, no doubt, he used for his own purposes and for reasons of policy the men who thus became his friends. His friendship for Swift undoubtedly began in this way, and the politician made the best use possible of the talents of the writer. Swift was at first no doubt attracted to him merely because of the consideration with which he was treated, which came as a reaction after the coldness of the Whigs. The Tory leader was, moreover, fairly easy to understand; he was not influenced by the caprice which renders a man of genius uncertain, and Swift quickly understood the whole of his nature. Harley, fortunately for himself, possessed none of those qualities which, while they attract, have as their accompanying defect a repelling force which prevents lasting friendship with their possessors. The insidious qualities of indifference and selfishness are not at first so apparent to the would-be friend. By the time Swift came to realize their existence in his patron, he had become greatly attached to him, and he was not the sort of friend to be easily turned aside. The attempted assassination of Harley reduced him to the lowest depth of despair, and no doubt contributed greatly to the warmth of his affection. It formed a prominent milestone in their friendship which was destined to deepen and strengthen in the years that followed until it reached its climax in Swift's rejection of offers of promotion in order to accompany his despised and discomfited patron into retirement. It is difficult to believe, however, that the friendship was as warmly reciprocated.

The calm indifference exhibited by Harley at the time of Guiscard's attempt characterized his relations and actions in every sphere of life. He was incapable of enthusiasm even where his own interests were concerned, and the fluctuation of a vacillating nature rendered decisive action almost an impossibility to him. In his lack of boldness he bears an extraordinary resemblance to Sir William Temple. The conscientiousness which characterized him in some respects, was not extended to friendship, and lack of tact led him into error, as, for instance, on the occasion when he sent Swift £50 as a reward for his services to the Tory party. Needless to say, it was refused, and some months passed before the statesman was reinstated in favour. His coldness to his friends was repeated in his treatment of his party, and his own interests were allowed to override those of the faction which he upheld. His lack of dignity, moreover, allowed him to rally round him the trimming Tories, while he left to St. John the straighter course. It has been suggested that finance was really his forte, and that politics should have been secondary to it. No doubt he won favour by backstairs methods through his relationship to Abigail Hill. He was destined to be eclipsed in his own time by the superior brilliance and straightforwardness of Bolingbroke, and his star in history has been completely extinguished by the magnitude of the latter's genius. It was perhaps scarcely a matter for wonder that the political friendship between these two did not last, for it was founded merely on

convenience and not on mutual respect ; yet we cannot help regretting that a state partnership so famous as this should have ended in open hostility and bitter recrimination. Bolingbroke wrote of Harley to Swift : " You and I have known one man in particular who affected business he often hindered and never did ; who had the honour among some, and the blame among others, of bringing about great revolutions in his own country, and who was at the same time the idlest creature living ; who was never more copious than in expressing, when that was the theme of the day, his indifference to power and his contempt of what we call honours . . . who should, to have been consistent, have had this indifference and have felt this contempt, since he knew neither how to use power nor how to wear honour, and yet who was jealous of one and fond of the other even to ridicule." " A general of miners " is the scornful soubriquet applied to him by Bolingbroke. No doubt he fully expected to be deserted by Harley in the end, and his expectations were fulfilled. The two men were so entirely opposite in character, and though they were masters of the same political party, they belonged to different factions of that party, for Bolingbroke led the new Tories and Harley upheld the old, so that essentially their tenets were different, and their alliance could not be of long duration. Harley, moreover, though a Tory, remained true to Presbyterian ideals throughout his life, and the conscience developed thereby must have caused him much trepidation when he observed Bolingbroke's course

of action. The commonplace temperament finds it difficult to appreciate the mind which is obviously above those of its fellows, and, as a rule, imputes to it lower motives than those which actually guide its own action.

The anecdote of the puritanical Lady Harley is illustrative of the spirit of her husband and his household. When asked by the Duchess of Sunderland if she were acquainted with a certain lord, the old lady piously answered, "I know no lord, but the Lord Jehovah." It was no doubt typical of Harley's attitude and life, when he wished to appear at his best.

Swift describes him. "Mr. Harley had the honour of being chosen Speaker successively to three Parliaments: he was the first of late years, that ventured to restore the forgotten custom of treating his Prince with duty and respect. Easy and distinguished in private conversation, with such a weight of affairs upon his shoulders; of great learning, and as great a favourer and protector of it: intrepid by nature, or will, or by the consciousness of his own integrity, and a despiser of money: pursuing the true interest of his Prince and country against all obstacles. Sagacious to view into the remotest consequences of things, by which all difficulties fly before him. A firm friend, and a placable enemy, sacrificing his greatest resentments, not only to public good, but to common intercession and acknowledgment. Yet with all these virtues it must be granted, there is some



mixture of human infirmity. His greatest admirers must confess his skill at cards and dice to be very low and superficial, in horse racing he is utterly ignorant; thus, to save a few millions to the public, he never regards how many worthy citizens he hinders from making their plum. And surely there is one thing never to be forgiven him, that he delights to have his table filled with black coats, whom he uses as if they were gentlemen."

Bolingbroke, with a mental and moral genius far above the rest of his time, has suffered greatly from the criticism of the sordidly minded, and, probably, most of all, from the contemporary judgment of Harley and his admirers. No doubt Harley's distrust of him led to a similar attitude on the part of Swift, for he never felt for Bolingbroke the affection that marked his friendship with Harley. Partly, no doubt, Swift was repelled by a mind which, so far, overshadowed his own. A genius like that of Swift will suffer no rival, brook no superiority either mental or social, and he must have felt himself far below Bolingbroke in every way. This was, perhaps, in some ways extraordinary, for Bolingbroke was the only one of Swift's contemporaries who really understood him. It may have been that these two men had in common the characteristic, so aptly applied by the Lord Treasurer to Swift, of an "inverted hypocrisy." It is possibly the attitude of life which must be adopted by men who so far excel their fellows as Swift and his contemporary did, each in their own sphere, for they know that ordinary men

will not believe in the high motives which really actuate them. Both held the true opinion of themselves that they were born apart from the ordinary run of human beings, both felt bitterly the loneliness which this entails ; both have suffered from the contemptuous criticism of those who neither know nor wish to know them.

Swift speaks enthusiastically of Bolingbroke. "It happens to very few men, in any age or country, to come into the world with so many advantages of nature and fortune as the late Secretary Bolingbroke, descended from the best families in England, heir to a great patrimonial estate, of a sound constitution, and a most graceful, amiable person : but all these, had they been of equal value, were infinitely inferior in degree to the accomplishments of his mind, which was adorned with the choicest gifts that God has thought fit to bestow upon the children of men, a strong memory, a clear judgment, a vast range of wit and fancy, a thorough comprehension, an invincible eloquence, with a most agreeable elocution. He had well cultivated all these talents by travel and study, the latter of which he seldom omitted even in the midst of his pleasures, of which he had, indeed, been too great and criminal a pursuer : for although he was persuaded to leave off intemperance in wine, which he did for some time to such a degree that he seemed rather abstemious, yet he was said to allow himself other liberties, which can by no means be reconciled to religion or morals, whereof I have reason to believe he began to be sensible. But he

was fond of mixing pleasure and business, and of being esteemed excellent at both : upon which account he had great respect for the characters of Alcibiades or Petronius, especially the latter, whom he would be gladly thought to resemble. His detractors charged him with some degree of affectation, and perhaps not altogether without grounds, since it was hardly possible for a young man, with half the business of the nation upon him, and the applause of the whole, to escape some share of that infirmity. He had been early bold to business, was an artful negotiator, and perfectly understood foreign affairs. But what I have often wondered at in a man of his temper was his prodigious application whenever he thought it necessary : for he would plod whole days and nights like the lowest clerk in an office. His talent of speaking in public, for which he was so very celebrated, I know nothing of, except from the information of others : but understanding men of both parties have assured me that in this point, in their memory and judgment, he was never equalled."

We are inclined to apply to Bolingbroke his description of a great soul in the Spirit of Patriotism. They "come into the world, or at least continue in it after the effects of surprise and inexperience are over, like men who have been sent on more important errands ; they observe with distinction, they admire with knowledge. They may indulge themselves in pleasure : but as their industry is not employed about trifles, so their amusements are not made the business of their lives. Such men cannot pass unperceived

through a country. If they retire from the world, their splendour accompanies them and enlightens even the obscurity of their retreat. If they take a part in public life, the effect is never indifferent. They either appear like ministers of divine vengeance, and their course through the world is marked by desolation and oppression, by poverty and servitude : or they are the guardian angels of the country they inhabit, busy to avert even the most distant evil, and to maintain or to procure peace, plenty, and the greatest of human blessings, liberty."

Bolingbroke stands out among his contemporaries absolutely alone. He is not surrounded by a small circle of admirers like Harley. His position was won and maintained purely by the magnificence of his genius, it was lost through the jealousy and distrust of those who did not understand him. His conduct, after his downfall, in seeking the Jacobite camp, has left him open to the suspicion of earlier intrigues on behalf of the Pretender, but of this charge he stands once and for all acquitted if we consider that such a course of action would have been entirely opposed to the dictates of common-sense, and therefore quite out of the question for a man of Bolingbroke's character. That such a charge should have been preferred against him only brings on those who have invented it the onus of a deliberate failure to understand the subtlety of the intellect of the man whom they have placed in the dock. On this charge and that of unfaithfulness to his wife, Bolingbroke's maligners have taken their stand. Both have been

so ably refuted by Mr. Sichel, that it is unnecessary to enter into them further here. The character of Bolingbroke, in spite of the warmest of warm defences, will, no doubt, always be open to the finger of calumny because of his greatness. He did not stoop to the undignified courses which his contemporaries thought it no shame to follow. His meteoric genius flashed through history at a speed which none could overtake. His motives, therefore, could not be analyzed, though they could be misunderstood: the trail of the meteor has been seen in the thought of Voltaire, in the poetry of Pope, and in the foreign policy maintained by England to our day. Yet though we have in these two men, on whom the eyes of all England were turned at that time, two entirely opposite characters, they both maintained one principle, that government by faction was injurious to the country. They meant to unite the whole country into one solid phalanx, in spite of the many divisions of New Tory, Old Tory, Jacobite Tory, and a dozen others. Swift ridicules the attempt to call the Tory administration a faction. "Is that a faction forsooth which is supported by Queen and Parliament and by nine-tenths of the nation? For twenty years the nation has groaned under the idolatrous burden of those who sucked her blood for gain, we have carried on wars that we might fill the pockets of stock-jobbers. We have revised our constitution, and by a great and mighty effort have secured our Protestant succession, only that we may become the tools of a faction, who arrogate to themselves the sole merit

of what was a national act. We are governed by upstarts who are unsettling the landmarks of our social system, and are displacing thus the influence of our landed gentry by that of a class of men who find profit in their woes. If the late discarded ministry represented anything, they represented this, and the change that has now come will awaken the nation to a sense of its mistakes, and will recover the rightful influence of the landed gentry and will rid us of the pestilential swarm of stock-jobbers who are confederate with the Whigs." "These men come with the spirit of shopkeepers to frame rules for the administration of kingdoms: as if they thought the whole art of government consisted in the importation of nutmegs and the curing of herrings."

In this way the new Tory writer poured forth his volumes of wrath in the pages of the *Examiner*. This was a weekly paper which Swift conducted from November 2, 1710, to June 14, 1711. It was an appeal to the nation as to a race of patriots to support their country irrespective of party, and to maintain her welfare regardless of the interests of individuals.

Doubtless the Tory leaders did not relinquish their overtures of friendship to the man who could thus support them. The Whigs had on their side Addison, who opposed Swift in the *Whig Examiner*, but the Whig writer could not hope to outdo Swift in trenchant and convincing argument. Swift had a sledge-hammer weapon. In his pamphlets he



RICHARD STEELE  
 1672-1729



JOSEPH ADDISON  
 1672-1719





acted on the supposition that if a fact were expressed loudly, emphatically, and in a new way, it would appeal to his readers, and the truth of it would, in time, dawn on them. Their temporary value was, therefore, very great, though to us they appear perhaps uninteresting. For clear, trenchant, forcible utterances they are unequalled. Given a cause which he thought worthy, none could equal him in defending it, and the cause which it was now his duty to support seemed to him the worthiest possible. Bolingbroke had explained to him the objects and working of the new Government, and he sympathized fully with the Tory object of winning over the whole nation and uniting it in one desire for peace. The Whig Government had involved the country in war, the Tory Government must lay stress on the necessity for peace, and thus what Swift supported because it appealed to all his sympathies, the Tories made their party cry. On the whole the arrangement was a convenient one.

It is not wonderful to find the friendship between Addison and Swift gradually growing colder. Up to the end of the year 1710, Swift's letters to Stella contain the warmest references to his friends Addison and Steele. The first hint of coolness comes in December. "I had been hankering with Mr. Harley to save Steele his other employment, and have a little mercy on him, and I had been saying the same thing to Lewis, who is Mr. Harley's chief favourite. Lewis tells Mr. Harley how kindly I should take it, if he would be reconciled to Steele,

etc. Mr. Harley on my account falls in with it and appoints Steele a time to let him attend him, which Steele accepts with great submission, but never comes nor sends any excuse. Whether it was blundering, sullenness, insolence, or rancour of party, I cannot tell: but I shall trouble myself no more about him. I believe Addison hindered him out of mere spite, being grated to the soul to think he should ever want my help to save his friend." A few months later a coldness of some duration was established between them, though Swift still appreciated their work. "Have you seen the *Spectator* yet?" he writes to Stella, "a paper that comes out every day? 'Tis written by Mr. Steele, who seems to have gathered new life, and have a new fund of wit: it is in the same nature as his *Tatlers*, and they have all of them had something pretty. I believe Addison and he club. I never see them, and I plainly told Mr. Harley and Mr. St. John ten days ago, before my Lord-keeper and Lord Rivers, I had been foolish enough to spend my credit with them in favour of Addison and Steele: but that I would engage and promise never to say one word on their behalf, having been used so ill for what I had already done." Yet in spite of this temporary coldness, Swift and Addison became friends again, for their affection for one another was of too stable a character to be easily uprooted.

No doubt Swift's conscience was appeased when his friends were all in the Tory camp. The sincerity of his character demanded that he should hold the

same opinions in every way as those whom he admitted on terms of intimacy. It must have been difficult for him to remain friends with those over whose pet convictions he was riding rough-shod, and whose idol he was trying to throw down. For, though Addison was a paid writer on the Whig side, he was, throughout his career, a staunch upholder of the best of the Whig principles. He was not merely a stock-jobber, his politics were based on convictions. It was natural, therefore, that he and Swift, who both held serious convictions, should separate for the time, for nothing is so detrimental to friendship as disagreement on politics or religious questions. Yet to Stella he confessed that it was something of a trouble to him. She was the recipient of all his small troubles and anxieties. To her he could tell, without fear of repetition, the story of any temporary coldness on the part of his patrons, for the days in which coldness on the part of those who supported him could make him anxious were not over for Swift. It was merely a repetition of the days at Moor Park when Sir William Temple held the place which Harley held now in Swift's esteem. Swift's bravado in boasting of his power over Harley and refusal to receive him back into favour without a humble apology, pointed simply to a natural anxiety which was not now to be manifested in his pale looks and trembling demeanour, as in the days of his dependence. "I called on Mr. Secretary to see what the devil ailed him on Tuesday: I made him a very proper speech:

I told him 'I observed he was much out of temper : that I did not expect he would tell me the cause, but would be glad to see he was better.' And one thing I warned him of, 'Never to appear cold to me, for I would not be treated like a schoolboy : that I had felt too much of it in my life (meaning Sir William Temple), that I expected every great minister, who honoured me with his acquaintance, if he heard or saw anything to my disadvantage, would let me know in plain words, and not put me in pain to guess by the change or coldness of his countenance or behaviour : for it was what I would hardly bear from a crowned head, and I thought no subject's favour was worth it : and that I designed to let my lord keeper, Mr. Harley, know the same thing, that they might use me accordingly. He took all right ; said I had reason ; vowed nothing ailed him but sitting up whole nights at business and one night at drinking : would have had me dine with him and Mrs. Masham's brother, to make up matters, but I would not."

His little quarrels with Harley and St. John are related, together with stories of that "rogue Patrick." "Did not I tell you Patrick has got a bird, a linnet, to carry over to Dingley ? It was very tame at first, and 'tis now the wildest I ever saw. He keeps it in a closet, where it makes a terrible litter, but I say nothing. When must we answer our M.D.'s letter ? one of these odd-comeshortlies. This is a week old, you see, and no farther yet. Mr. Harley desired I would drive with him to-day, but I refused him, for

I fell out with him yesterday, and will not see him again till he makes some amends: and so I go to bed."

On the following day he writes: "I was this morning early with Mr. Lewis of the Secretary's Office, and saw a letter Mr. Harley had sent to him desiring to be reconciled; but I was deaf to all entreaties, and have desired Lewis to go to him, and let him know I expect further satisfaction. If we let these great ministers pretend too much, there will be no governing them. He promises to make me easy, if I will but come and see him; but I won't, and he shall do it by message, or I will cast him off." He is determined by sheer self-assertion to maintain his position, even at the expense of his own dignity. "I dined to-day with Mr. Secretary St. John: I went to the Court of Requests at noon, and sent Mr. Harley into the House to call the Secretary, to let him know I would not dine with him if he dined late. By good luck the Duke of Argyle was at the lobby of the House too, and I kept him in talk till the Secretary came out, then told them I was glad to see them together, and that I had a request to the Duke, which the Secretary must second, and his grace must grant." Later he remarks, "I have taken Mr. Harley into favour again."

It must have taken no small amount of forbearance on the part of the leaders of the ministry to endure such treatment. If they were endowed with a sense of humour, they no doubt saw the comic aspect of the Tory Government at the beck and call of this upstart

clergyman, who met with little favour among others of his cloth.

“ A clergyman of special note,  
For shunning others off his coat ;  
Which made his brethren of the gown  
Take care betimes to run him down.”

Yet they knew that they must keep him on their side, for everything depended on him ; he was the one man for their purpose. Swift had, perhaps, reached one height of his ambition. He moved on what to him were terms of equality with the greatest men in the kingdom. He was far above any of his fellow-writers. As a clergyman he was considered to be among the number of those marked out for the highest promotion. Socially he was intimate with the most important frequenters of the Court. He had already begun to be held as the necessary medium between those whose favour was required to achieve position and those who desired it. His next achievement was for him even more than this ; he obtained the logical development of all his dreams, and became the one man necessary in the world which formed his true environment. He knew that the one thing necessary to establish the Tory supremacy was to overthrow Marlborough, the idol of the Whig party. Marlborough, as the centre of Whig interests, necessarily performed the much-required office of lode-stone. All eyes were turned on him, and on his future success depended the Whig power. He was typical of the party to which he belonged. The war was kept going as a speculation by the monied

classes, by Whig stock-jobbers, who knew that success in this branch of speculation meant enormous monetary increase for their own pockets, as well as a great measure of political power. In Marlborough they had had a most successful managing director, he was invaluable to them. Now that they had lost the ascendancy he was still indispensable, and an attack on him meant a most serious onslaught on the main body of the Whigs. Thus Swift determined to attack him in a wholly equivocal manner, in such a way that he might perhaps lead the Whigs eventually back to support the Government to some extent. Peace must be achieved at any cost, peace could not be achieved without the fall of Marlborough. Swift's attitude to Marlborough is characteristic. He recognized the man's real greatness. He writes, December, 1710: "I was early this morning with Secretary St. John . . . he told me he had been with the Duke of Marlborough, who was lamenting his former wrong step in joining with the Whigs, and said he was worn out with age, fatigue, and misfortunes. I swear it pitied me, and I really think they will not do well in too much mortifying that man, although, indeed, it is his own fault. He is covetous as Hell, and ambitious as the prince of it: he would fain have been general for life, and has broken all endeavours for peace, to keep his greatness and get money."

He is unwilling that Marlborough should be hardly treated, and yet he wishes to have peace. "I fear people will begin to think that nothing thrives under this ministry: and if the ministry

can once be rendered odious to the people, the Parliament may be chosen Whig or Tory, as the Queen pleases. Then I think our friends press a little too hard on the Duke of Marlborough. The country members are violent to have past faults inquired into, and they have reason ; but I do not observe the ministry to be very fond of it. In my opinion we have nothing to save us but a peace, and I am sure we cannot take such a course as we hoped, and then the Whigs will bawl what they would have done had they continued in power. I tell the ministry this as much as I dare, and shall venture to say a little more to them, especially about the Duke of Marlborough, who, as the Whigs gave out, will lay down his command : and I question whether ever any wise state laid aside a general who had been successful nine years together, whom the enemy so much dreads, and his own soldiers cannot help believe must always conquer ; and you know that in war opinion is nine points in ten. . . ."

Once more Swift's reason came into contact with his politics. The interests of his party, on the surface, demanded the fall of Marlborough, the real welfare of the nation demanded the support of a reformed Marlborough, purged of the vice and avarice which Swift considered his great failing. A letter in the *Examiner* to Marlborough under the cognomen "Crassus" was provoked by his attempt to obtain a life Generalship. He grants to him "gracefulness of person : a clear understanding cultivated by the knowledge of men and manners." "He



is no ill orator in the Senate:" he is said "to excel in the art of bridling and subduing his anger, and stifling or concealing his resentment. He has been a most successful general, of long experience, great conduct, and much personal courage. He has gained many important victories for the commonwealth, and forced the strongest towns in Mesopotamia to surrender, for which frequent supplications have been decreed by the Senate. Yet, with all these qualities, and this merit, he is neither beloved by the patrician or plebeians at home, nor by the officers and private soldiers of your own army abroad." He proceeds then to point out that the failure of Crassus is due to his great fault avarice, which is so enormous that against it his virtues are nothing. "The moment you quit this vice," he concludes, "you will be a truly great man: and still there will be imperfections enough remaining to convince us you are not a god." We cannot help being struck here by the thought, overdrawn though the comparison may be, that Swift is merely using Marlborough's name to cover the Whig party, who upheld the war purely from the motive of self-interest. For this sparing eulogy of Marlborough he received a stern rebuke from the Tory leaders. "Lord Rivers, talking to me the other day, cursed the paper called the *Examiner* for speaking civilly of the Duke of Marlborough."

The Tories stood in need of all their combined forces. Even if the Tory party had been united, the ministry was not yet sufficiently established to have any feeling of permanency. But it was

supported by a "kingdom divided against itself," and its insecurity came from within. There was a set of Tories to whom Swift referred when he wrote to Stella: "This (Lord Rivers' anger) I happened to talk of to the Secretary, who blamed the warmth of that lord, and some others, and swore that, if their advice was followed, they would be blown up in twenty-four hours."

This ill-judged set consisted for the most part of country squires—middle-aged, hot-headed, stupid—who wished to drive the Government into extreme measures. For expressing their opinions they had banded themselves into the October Club, where they aired their grievances with, no doubt, much liquid nourishment. They were, in spite of—or perhaps more correctly, because of—their incapacity, a great source of danger to the Tory party, for they were utterly unwise in their methods, and from them, no doubt, came many unwise utterances, very detrimental to the safety of their party. "We are plagued here," says Swift, "with an October Club, that is, a set of above a hundred Parliament men of the country, who drink October beer at home, and meet every evening at a tavern near the Parliament, to consult affairs, and drive things on to extremes against the Whigs, to call the old ministry to account and get off five or six heads." The obstinacy of the Queen also served to make the Tory position critical. She had been so much kept in subjection by the Whig Government that she was determined to avoid the possibility of a repetition of Ministerial tyranny,

and was most intractable. "They" (the Tories) "have cautioned the Queen so much against being governed that she observes it too much." The Whig Somers was once more ingratiating himself in favour with the Queen, and the Tories had a formidable antagonist in the Duchess of Somerset, who was the favourite then in power. The Tory position was extremely critical when, as they, no doubt, looked upon it three weeks afterwards, by the kindly intervention of providence, an attempt was made to assassinate Harley. The ministry was safe.

Swift was overwhelmed. "Oh dear M. D., my heart is almost broken. You will hear the thing before this comes to you. I write a full account of it this night to the Archbishop of Dublin, and the Dean may tell you the particulars from the Archbishop. I was in a sorry way to write, but thought it might be proper to send a true account of the fact; for you will hear a thousand lying circumstances. It is of Mr. Harley's being stabbed this afternoon at three o'clock at a committee of the Council." Swift's affectionate soul was wrung with grief. "Pray pardon my distraction! I now think of all his kindness to me—the poor creature now lies stabbed in his bed by a desperate Popish villain."

The Marquis of Guiscard, who had tried to murder Harley, had a grievance against Government, and especially against St. John, and on the occasion of his own arraignment before the Council had intended to assassinate the Secretary, who, however had taken Harley's place at the Council,

and thus Harley had fallen the easier victim. "He had," says Swift, "committed several enormities in France, was extremely prodigal and vicious, of a dark, melancholy complexion, and cloudy countenance, such as in vulgar physiognomy is called an ill-look. For the rest, his talents were very mean, having a sort of inferior cunning, but very small abilities, so that a great man of the late ministry by whom he was invited over, and with such discretion raised at first step from a profligate popish priest to a lieutenant-general, and colonel of a regiment of horses, was forced at last to drop him for shame."

Swift graphically describes the incident. "A great minister in high confidence with the Queen, under whose management the weight of affairs at present is in a great measure supposed to lie, sitting in council in a royal palace, with a dozen chief officers of the State, is stabbed at the very board in the execution of his office by the hand of a French papist, then under examination for high treason. The assassin redoubles his blow to make sure work, and concluding the Chancellor was dispatched, goes on with the same rage to murder a principal secretary of state, and that whole noble assembly are forced to rise, and draw their swords in their own defence, as if a wild beast had been let loose among them." There was political intent in his description of Harley's behaviour. "After the wound was given, he (Harley) was observed neither to change his countenance, nor discover any concern or disorder in his speech: he

rose up, and walked along the room while he was able, with the greatest tranquillity, during the midst of the confusion. When the surgeon came, he took him aside and desired he would inform him freely whether the wound was mortal, because in that case, he had some affairs to settle, relating to his family. The blade of the pen-knife, broken by the violence of the blow against a rib, within a quarter of an inch of the handle, was dropt out (I know not whether from the wound, or his clothes) as the surgeon was going to dress him; he ordered it to be taken up, and wiping it himself, gave it somebody to keep, saying, he thought 'it now properly belonged to him.' He shewed no sort of resentment, or spoke one violent word against Guiscard, but appeared all the while the least concerned of any in the company—a state of mind which, in such an exigency, nothing but innocence can give, and is truly worthy of a Christian philosopher."

Swift, indeed, knew how to make full use of this accident on the side of the ministry. He won over the whole country for the time, by a dexterous appeal to their emotions. The Tory fortunes, however, waned once more in the suspicion of an intrigue. Prior had been sent to Paris with power to negotiate for peace. It is said that Swift was ignorant. He was required, however, to keep the Whigs off the scent, and for this purpose wrote a mock account of Prior's mission after his return. The Opposition, however, were not to be easily

cheated, and determined to make a final struggle. They had the House of Lords on their side, and were strong in the combination of Somers, Godolphin, Marlborough and Nottingham. If they had had Swift they would undoubtedly have prevailed, but Swift was working on the other side, and brought off a *coup d'etat* which almost ensured the balance on the side of the ministry. The final contest took place in the autumn of 1711. The Whig pamphlets were answered once for all by Swift's great work, "The Conduct of the Allies," in which he developed more fully, and with greater perfection of style, the work begun in the *Examiner*. He ascribed the failure of the war to the corruption of the Whig leaders. The pamphlet appealed to the popular taste, and all would have gone well had it not been for Harley's lack of capacity for decisive action. He allowed the Whigs to obtain a majority and Nottingham to move an amendment that no peace would be safe which left Spain to the Bourbons. For the moment the Tory outlook was hopeless. The leaders suspected the Queen of leanings to the Whig side. "I was this morning with Mr. Secretary," writes Swift. "We are both of opinion that the Queen is false. I told him what I had heard, and he confirmed it by other circumstances. I then went to my friend Lewis, who had sent to see me. He talks of nothing but retiring to his estate in Wales. He gave me reason to believe the whole matter is settled between the Queen and the Whigs; he hears that Lord Somers is to be

Treasurer, and believes, that sooner than turn out the Duchess of Somerset, she will dissolve the Parliament, and get a Whiggish one, which may be done by managing elections." Both Harley and St. John were trembling for their own safety, though they affected tranquillity. All three knew that affairs were being managed simply by a woman, that everything depended on the ambitions of the Duchess of Somerset. If she were overthrown it might yet go well with the ministry. Swift therefore determined on a stroke of policy which, at the expense of ruining his personal hopes for ever, might overthrow the Duchess and buoy up the Government. He wrote the "Windsor Prophecy," in which he made an open attack on the Duchess. Unfortunately for himself an after-thought of recalling it from publication was impossible, and a few copies were spread abroad. It was a mistake, for it only irritated the Duchess, and through her, the Queen. It did not, however, have any effect on the fortunes of the Government. On December 29, they achieved an enormous victory which Swift describes to Stella: "I have broken open my letter, and tore it into the bargain, to let you know we are all safe; the Queen has made no less than twelve lords, to have a majority; nine new men, the other three peers' sons, and has turned out the Duke of Somerset. She is awakened at last, and so is Lord Treasurer (Harley); I want nothing now but to see the Duchess out. But we shall do without her. We are all extremely happy. Give me joy, sirrahs."

Three days later Marlborough was "turned out of all his employments," though Somerset was not overthrown, and the Tory ministry, with this exception, could congratulate itself on the achievement of its highest aspirations. The great struggle was over. With the end of the struggle came the end of the need of Tory enterprise and energy. Throughout history it has been true that an external enemy maintains internal health and prosperity, and that absence of danger from outside induces men to invent an internal peril. National nerves must always be calmed by real peril.

"Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do."

In the case of Swift, it seemed as though he had strung himself up for the fight, and that when the strain was removed, by a natural reaction, his strength and capacity failed. The "Conduct of the Allies" was the climax of his pamphleteering campaign. The crisis was over, the catastrophe had begun, though it was not yet apparent to the ordinary observer. What did the ordinary observer see? A self-assertive person, who was manifestly of obscure origin, claiming equality with those evidently far above him in social position. To them he seemed to think that the best way of asserting his superiority was to assume an attitude of almost vulgar familiarity in public with the Tory leaders; he would send them on messages, would refuse their invitations to dinner, except on his own condition, and would frequently pretend to be insulted by some



remark of theirs, and refuse to forgive them for days together, taking great care to give as much publicity as possible to the whole affair. It was the elementary expression of a certain simplicity of disposition which characterized Swift throughout his life, and which, though it was sometimes of an unpleasant nature, for the most part added charm to his demeanour. It was, perhaps, the simplicity of genius. On the other side, we see the greatest genius of his time, who had risen to the highest possible position purely by means of his attainments ; a man who could hold the world at his beck and call, to whom all bowed as to their superior. It was to Swift that the victorious general Peterborough first paid homage on his return to England. Swift was sought out by foreign ambassadors a few months later to receive the thanks and good will of their royal masters. His was a name which rang throughout Europe as the name of the man who could move mountains. On his efforts had depended the fate of a whole party. It was owing to his steadfast allegiance to her interests that the cause of the Church was strengthened and established. He was praised and lauded by every one of importance. Oxford and Bolingbroke looked on him as their truest friend ; both had a genuine affection for him. Bolingbroke wrote to him in 1716 : " It is a very great truth that among all the losses which I have sustained, none affected me more sensibly than that of your company and correspondence : and yet, even now, I should not venture to write to you, did not you provoke me

to it. Your letter breathes the same spirit, as your conversation at all times inspired, even when the occasions of practising the severest rules of virtuous fortitude seemed most remote. Adieu, dear friend; may the kindest influence of Heaven be shed upon you. Whether we may ever meet again, that Heaven only knows: if we do, what millions of things shall we have to talk over. In the meanwhile, believe that nothing sits so near to my heart as my country and my friends, and that among these you ever had, and shall have, a principal place." In another letter he wrote: "I know not whether the love of fame increases as we advance in age: sure I am that the force of friendship does. I loved you almost twenty years ago: I thought of you as well as I do now: better was beyond the power of conception: or, to avoid an equivoue, beyond the extent of my ideas." The correspondence between these two men throws a strong light on the "inverted hypocrisy" which characterized both, and though we must perforce regret the publication of intimate correspondence as a tasteless slight to the authors of it, yet, in the case of Swift, we cannot do without it. In few cases has it been so important to know that side of the man which is unconsciously given to another. Perhaps he was only really known and understood by two people, Stella and Bolingbroke, for undoubtedly Bolingbroke knew him much better than Oxford. The true altruist is never understood by his generation, seldom by posterity; even his intimate friends, who are necessarily few in number, if in the plural

at all, only recognize a certain appreciable benevolence, while the great principle underlying it is utterly disregarded. Shelley and Swift are, perhaps, the two best examples of the altruist entirely misunderstood both by their own time and posterity. They were equally altruists, though in an extraordinarily different way. It is much pleasanter to think of this side of Swift's character, than of the politician and statesman; even the satirist is less pleasing to our consideration than the friend and philanthropist. The greatness which appeals to the world always has its seamy side, but neither Swift's bitterest detractors nor the foolishly mischievous, who abuse him through ignorance, can quarrel with his love of his willows at Laracor. Even at the time when he was watching, with all the keenness of a participator, the tremendous struggle of parties on which the foreign policy of England depended, he could still write to his women friends at Laracor in the "little" language. He would describe the beauty of the early spring, chatter about his dinners, gossip about his household arrangements and theirs, and execute all their various commissions. The great politician occupying his mind with ladies' aprons offers an amusing picture. All his walks are described to them, and his rides to and from Chelsea. Fairy tales at times formed his relaxation. His favourite recreation was to study the idiosyncrasies of human nature, the drunken bouts of his servant Patrick, and the little foibles of ladies of his acquaintance. Life was the stage which he liked to contemplate, human

beings the actors whose characteristics formed his amusement. As nothing was too great for him, nothing was too trifling. If he had been a poet, he would have been the poet of children ; if convention in literature had allowed of nonsense verse, Swift would have been pre-eminently the nonsense writer. In prose he revels in it. His early friendship for Stella points to the mind that understood children. "Gulliver's Travels" confirms the idea. Francis Thompson thus defines the childlike imagination, "Know you what it is to be a child? It is to be something very different from the man of to-day. It is to have a spirit yet streaming from the waters of baptism ; it is to believe in love, to believe in loveliness, to believe in belief : it is to be so little that the elves can reach to whisper in your ear : it is to turn pumpkins into coaches, and mice into horses, lowness into loftiness, and nothing into everything, for each child has its fairy godmother in its own soul ; it is to live in a nutshell, and to count yourself the king of infinite grace ; it is

‘To see a world in a grain of sand,  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,  
And eternity in an hour ;’

it is to know not as yet that you are under sentence of life, nor petition that it be commuted into death."

A power of this kind enabled Swift to write "Gulliver's Travels" and the "Battle of the Books." Had his imagination been also that of the poet we

should have had from him sublime works, but then we should not have had "Gulliver's Travels." An exclamation of horror will no doubt come from the mouths of many who hear that the greatest of Swift's works was written by a man who knew what it was to "believe in love, to believe in loveliness: and to believe in belief." Swift knew all these things. It is and has always been our misfortune that we have had before us and been commanded to look at, the Swift represented by the garbled and distorted account of him given by Lord Orrery. In this have originated most of the untrue representations of the man. The charge of snobbishness, which one hears levied against him by those, perhaps, who have never read one word of his works, and perhaps have only been acquainted with him as portrayed in histories for students, is utterly untrue. The slightest knowledge of the real Swift for ever refutes it. His attitude to his superiors was an attitude never found in snobbish people. It has its place in the character of the most simple people. It is a characteristic which always accompanies simplicity. It is part of the mind which loves to look on and talk about those in high places, not as they are brought into a subjective connection, but simply as beings greater than the speaker. It is the feeling which the valet has for his titled master. It implies an enormous capacity for reverence of an elementary kind. It is essentially a childlike quality, without a vestige of the scheming which accompanies the ultra-British quality of snobbishness. Thus Swift can in no sense

be termed snobbish. The delight which he took in his position of equality with the great was only the inevitable reaction from the subordinate position of his youth, and while he revelled in high places his interests at the same time lay in the little things of earth, and his deepest affection was centred on a woman of mean birth and indifferent surroundings, whom he loved to introduce to his most distinguished friends.

His willows at Laracor were not allowed to engross him long. There were other and more important things at stake. The Government began to assume the character of a house divided against itself. Swift was standing on a dizzy pinnacle dispensing favours right and left. The higher the rank of a would-be new acquaintance the greater the condescension expected from him. A Duke must humble himself most of all before this audacious parson. "Mr. Secretary told me the Duke of Buckingham had been talking to him much about me, and desired my acquaintance. I answered it could not be, for he had not made sufficient advances. Then the Duke of Shrewsbury said he thought that the Duke was not used to make advances. I said I could not help that; for I always expected advances in proportion to men's quality and more from a Duke than from other men. The Duke replied that he did not mean anything of his quality, which was handsomely said enough, for he meant his pride; and I have invented a notion to believe that nobody is proud."

Swift's form of pride was an essentially useful

one. Unlike other men who have risen from nothing, he did not spurn his poor acquaintances. The Tory leaders humorously complained that he never came to see them "without a Whig in his sleeve." Besides those whom he knew intimately there were a thousand others who sought for his help. The fallen Sacheverell, for whom Swift had little liking, obtained a favour for his brother. Swift, in a parody on one of Horace's Odes, aptly describes the situation :—

" I get a whisper to withdraw  
When twenty fools I never saw  
Come with petitions fairly penned,  
Desiring I would stand their friend.  
This humbly offers me his case,  
That begs my interest for a place,  
A hundred other men's affairs  
Like bees are humming in my ears.  
' To-morrow my appeal comes on ;  
Without your help, the cause is gone—'  
' The Duke expects my lord and you  
About some great affairs at two.'  
' Put my Lord Bolingbroke in mind  
To get my warrant quickly signed ;  
Consider, too, my first request.'  
' Be satisfied, I'll do my best.'  
Then presently he falls to tease.  
' You may for certain if you please,  
I doubt not, if his lordship knew,  
And, Mr. Dean, one word from you.' "

A contemporary picture is given by Bishop Kennet in 1713.

" Swift came into the coffee-house, and had a bow from everybody but me. When I came to the ante-chamber to wait before prayers, Dr. Swift was the principal man of talk and business, and acted as

minister of requests. He was soliciting the Earl of Arran to speak to his brother, the Duke of Ormond to get a chaplain's place established in the garrison of Hull, for Mr. Fidders, a clergyman in that neighbourhood, who had lately been in jail and published sermons to pay fees. He was promising Mr. Thorold to undertake with my Lord Treasurer that according to his petition he should obtain a salary of £200 per annum, as minister of the English Church at Rotterdam. He stopped F. Gwynne, Esq., going in with the red bag to the Queen, and told him aloud he had something to say to him from my Lord Treasurer. He talked with the son of Dr. Davenant to be sent abroad, and took out his pocket-book, and wrote down several things as memoranda, to do for him. He turned to the fire, and took out his gold watch, and telling him the time of day, complained it was very late. A gentleman said 'it was too fast.' 'How can I help it,' says the Doctor, 'if the courtiers give me a watch that won't go right?' Then he instructed a young nobleman that the best poet in England was Mr. Pope (a Papist), who had begun a translation of Homer into English verse, for which he said he must have them all subscribe. 'For,' says he, 'the author *shall not* begin to print till I have a thousand guineas for him.' Lord Treasurer, after leaving the Queen, came through the room beckoning Dr. Swift to follow him; both went off just after prayers."

Yet, though Swift's enemies maligned him for ostentatious display of influence, and his friends



good-humouredly complained of his unceasing importunity, the efforts which roused against him these attacks had their solid fruit in very material benefits conferred on his friends and acquaintances. Swift had an extraordinary facility for making the cause of other people peculiarly his own. When his interest was once roused in any one who needed his help he would enter into and thoroughly understand the needs of that person. Thus it was in the case of William Harrison the young poet, whom "he set up in a new *Tatler*." Later, through Swift's introduction to St. John, Harrison was appointed secretary to Lord Raby, and afterwards Queen's Secretary at the Hague, which, as his patron said, was the finest office going for a young man. Unknown to Swift, however, it was a mirage, for the promised salary remained unpaid so long that Harrison was almost reduced to starvation. A fever acting upon a constitution weakened by deprivation carried off Swift's *protégé*, and reduced Swift to despair. Perhaps one of his most striking characteristics lies in the fact that, experienced man of the world as he was, he could be thrown into the deepest grief by the misfortunes of others. The details of personal losses could move him, though he desired to move in a world of big principles and wide issues. Without any undue boasting he could write to Stella, "Do you know I have taken more pains to recommend the Whig wits to the favour and mercy of the ministers, than any other people. Steele I have kept in his place. Congreve I have got to be used

kindly and secured. Rowe I have recommended and got a promise of a place. Phillips I should certainly have provided for, if he had not run party mad, and made me withdraw my recommendations. I set Addison so right at first that he might have been employed, and have partly secured him the place he has." He relates more particularly what he has done for Congreve. "I went late to town to-day, and dined with my friend Lewis. I saw Will Congreve attending at the Treasury, by order, with his brethren, the Commissioners of the Wine Licenses. I had often mentioned him with kindness to Lord Treasurer, and Congreve told me that after they had answered to what they were sent for my Lord called him privately and spoke to him with great kindness, promising his protection, etc. The poor man said he had been used so ill of late years, that he was quite astonished at my Lord's goodness, etc., and desired me to tell my Lord so: which I did this evening, and recommended him heartily. My Lord assured me he esteemed him very much, and would be always kind to him: that what he said was to make Congreve easy, because he knew people talked as if his Lordship designed to turn everybody out, and particularly Congreve, which indeed was true, for the poor man told me he apprehended it. As I left my Lord Treasurer I called on Congreve (knowing where he dined) and told him what had passed between my Lord and me: so I made a good man easy, and that's a good day's work."

Adieu, my  
good friend I am very truly  
your obedient and faithful  
servant

Adieu

your servant  
Robt Arbuthnot

for

Your most obedient  
humble servant

Tr Arbury

Chesterfield

Adieu Your most obedient humble servant

W. G.

W. Pulteney

Rich: Steele Mr. Carter &  
y<sup>r</sup> faithful humble & obedient serv<sup>t</sup>  
J. Lloyd  
to Rhode Island April 20. 1731

I am with the highest esteem and the utmost gratitude  
y<sup>r</sup> most humble and most obedient  
servant Voltaire.

y<sup>r</sup> obedient humble  
servant

W. G.

To serve with  
honour and shed your blood  
approved of above  
but hear below  
The Example  
It is fatal to be good



Lord Munificence was the *rôle* which he chose for himself at this time, and many were the unsolicited testimonials to his performance of the part. Dr. Berkeley, his old schoolfellow, Pope, Gay, Dr. King, Parnell, Trapp; Diaper, the poet; Tooke, his bookseller; Barber, his printer; all were deeply indebted to him. He wished to be thought a patron of letters. In our day he would, no doubt, have been known as the prophet of culture, but happily for the eighteenth century, that ideal was non-existent. He was chiefly instrumental in founding the Brother's Club, originally called The Society, to which were admitted all the most striking characters of the time. Sheridan thus describes its foundation: "He" (Swift) "was the life and soul of that famous society of sixteen, consisting of some of the first men of the age, in point of talents, rank, and virtue. To tie them closer to each other, he made them adopt the endearing name of brothers: and to spread the circle still wider, the ladies of the several members were called sisters, and even their children were nephews and nieces. Happy were the envied few who stood in this adopted relationship to Swift, and they never failed afterwards boastingly to use that title: as may be seen in several of their letters. Great was the canvassing to be admitted into that number: and the Duke of Ormond looked upon it as a high honour that he was elected a member without any application on his part. "The end of our Club" (says Swift), "is to advance conversation and friendship, and to reward deserving persons with our

interest and recommendation. We take in none but men of wit, or men of interest: and if we go on as we begin, no other club of the town will be worth talking of." To keep them steady to these points, and to prevent their degenerating into political meetings, Swift early opposed the admission of Lord Treasurer, and Lord Keeper, who had been proposed, and they were accordingly excluded: but their sons were received in their room. There are several instances mentioned of contributions raised by them to relieve indigent merit; such were distributed by Swift." No doubt the Society was very valuable while it lasted, but as all such institutions will, it began to suffer from the extravagance of its members. Many were the complaints of Swift on this score, the meetings gradually became less frequent, and it was dissolved in the course of a year or two.

There is a fallacy current among even the enlightened, notified by Bacon in his well-known saying, that he who loves solitude is either a beast or a god, by which he implies that the human being is a sociable animal. It is distinctly untrue. Human nature loves societies, but hates its kind, while it makes into an art the effort of being sociable. Thus it was not long before another Society was started by certain members of the last, including Swift, Pope, Arbuthnot, Gay, and Parnell. They called themselves the Scriblerus Club, and issued various writings as the memoirs of Master Scriblerus, a supposed member of the Society. Its ostensible

aim was literary. The design of its members was "to have ridiculed all the false tastes in learning, under the character of a man of capacity enough, that had dipped into every art and science, but injudiciously in each." Like its predecessor, however, this Club was short-lived, and was dispersed the same year. Its decease perhaps signalized the end of Swift's life as the centre of political activity. The year 1714 saw his retirement from public life, his fall from the high estate in which, for so long now, he had been established. Some account of its principal members may not be unfitting here. Pope and Arbuthnot were among those friends of Swift who clung to him to the last. Both have left in writing strong testimonials to his capacity for friendship. Surely no man ever had so wide or so deep a power of grappling friends to his soul. Arbuthnot wrote to him some years later: "Dear Friend, the last sentence of your letter plunged a dagger in my heart. Never repeat those sad but tender words, that you will try to forget me. For my part I can never forget you—at least till I discover, which is impossible, another friend whose conversation could procure me the pleasure I have found in yours."

Pope could write of him after an intimate friendship of some twenty years' standing: "My sincere love of that valuable, indeed incomparable, man will accompany him through life, and pursue his memory were I to live a hundred lives, as many of his works will live, which are absolutely original, unequalled,

unexampled. His humanity, his charity, his condescension, his candour, are equal to his wit, and require as good and true a taste to be equally valued."

At the end of the year 1713 all eyes must have been upon Swift. The minds of all his friends must have been concerned with one topic: what was to be his reward for all his labours? Swift himself had hopes of some literary post. Throughout his political career he had identified himself thoroughly with men of letters, and he wished now to obtain a triumphant exit crowned with literary laurels. The submission which he demanded from his social superiors might frequently be interpreted as a wish to exact deference towards the profession of letters which was only too likely to meet with universal contempt. One of his ambitions was to found an English academy, partly, no doubt, to put letters on a better footing. In connection with this design he had written in 1712 a paper entitled "a proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English language." The project, however, had been swept into oblivion by the political whirlwind. He recurred to this ambition when he applied for the post of historiographer. He had already written the "History of the Last Four Years of Queen Anne," which is distinctly disappointing, for it lacks the personal touch which always gives vigour to Swift's political writings. His application was, however, too late to be considered. Many reasons have been given for his failure to obtain preferment, among them Lord Orrery's charitable one, that Swift's



English friends preferred to keep him in Ireland by granting him some comparatively insignificant preferment rather than to allow him to remain in England where he was a perpetual danger. Other writers, with perhaps an equal lack of discernment, have described Swift as the dupe of the ministry, and have given as the reason for his works achieving no result, that the Tory leaders had now done with him and were ready to cast him off as a useless instrument. No one with real knowledge of Swift's character could believe this statement.

Perhaps the only reason which can have weight attached to it is that afforded by the Queen's dislike of Swift. Her hostility, roused by the "Tale of a Tub," was further fostered by the insinuations of the Duchess of Somerset, who, naturally, never forgave Swift the "Windsor Prophecy." It was impossible for the Queen to reconcile her conscience to bestowing any high ecclesiastical position on a man who had a reputation for being unorthodox. Thus Swift was passed over first for the Bishopric of Waterford, and throughout Anne's reign for one post after another, until he was finally rejected for the Bishopric of Down in favour of Sterne. But he did not aspire to an Irish bishopric. The reason is not difficult to seek. Ireland meant exile to all Englishmen. Swift looked upon the fact of his birth in Ireland as a disgrace. There was against Ireland a prejudice of long standing. It finds expression in the writings of Temple, who speaks as a member of the ruling class. The Irish themselves were looked upon as responsible

for their own misery and poverty. Temple thus describes it: "Ireland, where by the largeness and plenty of the food, and scarcity of people, all things necessary to life are so cheap, that an industrious man, by two days' labour, may gain enough to feed him the rest of the week: which I take to be a very plain ground of the laziness attributed to the people: for men naturally prefer ease before labour, and will not take pains, if they can live idle: though, when by necessity they have been inured to it, they cannot leave it, being grown a custom necessary to their health and to their very entertainment." This was the state of affairs in 1699, but in 1713, through their indolence resulting from prosperity, the Irish had become hopelessly poverty-stricken, and Ireland was looked on as a land of barbarians and as a country in which Englishmen could not live consistently with their dignity as Englishmen.

What a great thing is an Englishman's dignity! Swift, ever since the days of his residence with the Temples, had shared this prejudice and had looked back with bitter regret to his school-days and college life. The prejudice had, no doubt, increased since then, for Swift was not the sort of man to alter an opinion which was once firmly fixed. He refused to lay claim to Ireland as his birthplace. He "was dropped in Ireland," as he ungracefully termed it; but, he no doubt added, it was against his wishes. England was the country of his adoption, and throughout his political life he looked for English preferment. He was promised more than once a

prebend of Windsor, but, happily for himself, he put no trust in the promise. At the end of the year 1712 he began to grow impatient of the recurrence of empty promises on the part of the ministry. They had indeed "left him Jonathan as they found him." For the first time since his life as Secretary he determined to push forward his own cause, and to insist on preferment. He refused, therefore, to lend his services to the Tory leaders any longer unless they made some definite move to secure promotion for him. When once they saw that he was determined they advocated his cause, and when the deanery of St. Patrick's fell vacant they offered it to Swift. Preferment in Ireland, involving residence in the country which he most hated, was to be Swift's reward for all his work. May he not be allowed some expression of resentment? He was now forty-six, and after fifteen years of untiring service to his country he was to end his days thus. As years were considered then, he was an old man. Premature old age is the inevitable consequence of an intemperate generation, and in the eighteenth century men were old at forty, decrepit at fifty. Swift, whose life had always been most temperate in spite of the complaint from which he had suffered so many years, was considered extremely robust because he was still capable of conducting political warfare. It must always be borne in mind by those who consider his last years, that when he had reached the age of seventy-two or three he was looked on with the same compassion as we look on our old men of ninety. The old age

which men had to live through after seventy was that of the Strulldbrugs, whom their creator had represented with the most loathsome characteristics.

All these elements must be taken into consideration when we, standing beside Swift, look down at the prospect before him. There was only one alleviation—that he was returning to Stella whom he had looked forward to seeing for three years. It was not to her, however, that he expressed his disappointment. The heaviness which lay on his spirits is to be read between the lines of the journal. The definite expression of his misery is to be found in letters to Miss Vanhomrigh. “At my first coming I thought I should have died with discontent, and was horribly melancholy while they were installing me: but it began to wear off, and change to dulness.” There is something heart-breaking in this confession of dulness after a life of never-ending business and ceaseless toil which at the same time formed his enjoyment. There is no more unhappy word than “dull” in the English language. Dulness and boredom are two of the devil’s snares especially meant to entrap the pious who scorn enjoyment.

He had looked forward to a perpetual existence on a great stage surrounded by big issues, while he himself was to be the promoter of mighty schemes with wide and far-reaching results. A kingdom was the toy with which he would play, the greatest in that kingdom the ninepins which he would raise or overthrow at his pleasure. What did he see instead of this? A hopeless existence in a dirty depressing

town surrounded by poverty and distress. He saw himself surrounded by a people whom he looked down on as his inferiors. He would be cut off from all those whose interests were his own, far away from the party which he had helped so greatly to build up. He saw himself sinking into nothingness, forgotten by the country which had once rung with his name. Perhaps another would rise and take his place while he ate his heart out in vain longings. He would rust away in enforced idleness while the political world had need of him. This was to be the end of it. The great Swift, leader of men, who could influence nations for peace or war, was to enter on a long rest to which death was preferable. A preparation of thirty years, activity of twenty, and then a relapse to the chrysalis, to wait for the decay of old age. This was the future which he foresaw.

There was one piece of work required of him yet. The duumvirate of Harley and St. John had always threatened to collapse owing to the incompatibility of temperament of the two men. Harmony just now was of vital importance. The days of peace, however, were over. These two men were only another instance of the danger of prosperity. In accomplishing peace they had achieved what they had been summoned to do; but they had achieved it at an enormous risk to themselves. An unreasoning people had complained because of the weight of taxation and the accumulation of wealth by an unscrupulous general. An unreasoning people now complained because of the cessation of striking victories and

great prizes. The peace, moreover, while it had made England the first Power of Europe, had failed in its object. Philip still retained the Crown of Spain and the Catalonians were left unprotected. The merchant classes were, moreover, dissatisfied with the trade clauses of the Peace; the religious enthusiasm following on Sacheverell's impeachment had subsided. The question now remaining was that of the succession to the English throne, and from this side came the great danger to the Government.

The uncertainty of the Queen's health, and the grave rumours of the intrigues of the leaders of the ministry with the Pretender added to the precariousness of the Tory position. Both leaders were unpopular with different classes. Lastly the Government was a house divided against itself, hence its downfall was only a matter of time. Swift came to England and effected a temporary reconciliation. Immediately after his return to Ireland, however, Oxford and Bolingbroke again quarrelled. A second visit to England had no result, and he returned to his Deanery to write a remonstrance to the leaders. In the meantime came the news of Oxford's downfall and Bolingbroke's promotion to the chief place in the ministry. At the same time there came an offer of £1000 to pay the expenses of Swift's induction on condition that he would continue to support the Government. Once more he had the opportunity of a place in the middle of political activity. But now, as on some other occasions, affection got the better

of reason, and a heart-broken letter from Oxford induced Swift to give up his last chance and follow his friend into retirement. Bolingbroke's triumph, however, was short-lived. The Queen was dead in four days after his victory, and he had to fly the country, while Oxford was imprisoned.

Walpole the financier was pre-eminent. Swift was heartbroken, but still tried to keep up his spirits, offering to accompany Oxford to prison. It is not difficult to imagine what a terrible effect the downfall of his friends would have on him. His health had not been good for some time, and this last shock had a very bad effect on a highly nervous temperament. He was also troubled at this time by the affair with Miss Vanhomrigh. Thus his first years in his new position were extremely troublous ones. It required the fortitude of a moral Samson to undergo the anxieties and trouble which befel Swift at this time. Needless to say he came out of it triumphant, and the years in Ireland to which he had looked forward with so much dread were fraught with greater fame and happiness than any one could possibly have foreseen.

## CHAPTER V

### DON QUIXOTE

**S**WIFT as the courtier and chivalrous knight is a subject over which we may linger pleasantly, perhaps as in a rose-garden in summer after the cold blasts and rugged storms of winter. Yet this was no courtier of mincing phrases, and perfumed elegance, no purveyor in unmeaning flatteries, or obsequious insincerities. We will not insult him by calling him a sincere friend, the modern significance of the phrase is too full of obloquy, but suffice it to say that he was a true friend to both men and women. Yet he was not a "woman's man." With the exception of Stella, his greatest friends were among men, and he numbered among these some of the great ones of the eighteenth century. His friends were among the writers and politicians of the age (if one may be pardoned for using, as a matter of convenience, the futile but popular distinction), among the practical and active, rather than among the thinkers and leaders of speculative thought. Thus his circle consisted first of Somers, Congreve, Addison and Steele; it varied then to Bolingbroke, Oxford, Prior, Arbuthnot, Gay, and in later years we see him surrounded in Ireland by a



small circle of congenial spirits, including Pope, Sheridan and others. The course of these friendships is described each in its chronological sequence, but perhaps Swift's general characteristics as a friend may be discussed here. Sincerity, truthfulness and unselfishness were his in a remarkable degree. His allegiance, once given, was unaltered. Addison speaks of him as "the most agreeable companion and the truest friend of his age." Many must be the shocks to his belief in those whom he had "grappled to his soul" before he would give them up, and even then he maintained an affection for them and was ready to help them when opportunity offered. Among them may have been numbered those who, seeing the singleness of mind, almost simplicity, of the man in this respect, were willing and ready to take advantage of him—it must invariably happen so in the case of such a character—but if there were traitors among his friends, surely Swift's lack of perception in not recognizing them is no detriment to his character. In him simplicity and astuteness were combined to an extraordinary degree, the guilelessness of the child with the mature judgment of the experienced man of the world. Affection could thus lead his reason astray, and yet he was no sentimentalist nor given to yield to his emotions. He was not proof against impulse, generosity frequently prompted him to a suddenness of action which was unusual in a man of such rare sanity and concentration of purpose.

Another element tended to make him a difficult

member of society. The lack of that indefinable virtue, "good breeding," which no amount of social intercourse could teach him, for it depends perhaps on the power of merging one's own individuality in society in the interest of others, also led him into errors of impulse. The spirit which prompted him to demand subscriptions for the works of poor poets and to insist on getting them, regardless of his surroundings, points to a mixture of generosity and determination to achieve his purpose at any cost. His ostentatious and undue familiarity with the great, his love of displaying his power with his social superiors, his independent rejection of any sort of patronage, while they point to strength of character, also reveal an innate boorishness which no ameliorating influence could soften. Yet, though underneath there lay the sterling worth and forgetfulness of self which were pre-eminently his, we cannot overlook this fault on which perhaps he prided himself. Much more harm is done and greater injury inflicted by tasteless rudeness and ill-judged criticism than by courteous insincerities. Though this defect in Swift was treated as a humorous quality by the society in which he moved, it accounted probably for the repeated omissions of his name in the list of preferments, for many must have been the occasions when friend and foe alike, smarting under his caustic sarcasms, vowed vengeance to be taken sooner or later. Partly, perhaps, his love of power prevented him from recognizing the harm which he did to his own cause, but more

probably his complete obliviousness to criticism made him, at all costs, carry out his policy of ill-judged sincerity. There is nothing so invidious as the defect of a virtue, nothing so dangerous as an excess of goodness. Intemperance of character and a consequent dissipation invariably follow, though this is a fact little recognized.

The story of the Countess of Burlington is typical of Swift's bearing in society. "Dining one day with the Earl of Burlington soon after his Lordship's marriage, that nobleman, expecting some diversion from Swift's oddities of behaviour, purposely neglected to name him to his lady, who was entirely ignorant of the Dean's person. The Dean generally wore his gowns till they were quite rusty, which being then the case, she supposed him to be some clergyman of no great consequence. After dinner, the Dean said to her, 'Lady Burlington, I hear you can sing; come give me a song.' The lady, disgusted with this unceremonious way of asking such a favour, positively refused him. He said she should sing, or he would make her. 'What, madam, I suppose you take me for one of your poor paltry English hedge-parsons; sing when I bid you!' As the Earl did nothing but laugh at this freedom, the lady was so vexed, that she burst into tears and retired. His first compliment when he saw her a little time afterwards was 'Pray, madam, are you as ill-natured as when I saw you last?' to which she replied with the greatest good-humour, 'No, Mr. Dean, I will sing for you now, if you please.'"

Though political advancement was not to be his as the result of political friendships, yet he acted as agent again and again in the promotion of others. He came gradually to be looked upon as the mediator between those who had the power and those who wanted it, and all regarded him as the man whose good word was necessary before peace could be secured. Thus in a short time "he served fifty better than Sir William Temple had served him, and not relations either," he wrote to a friend. No object was too tiresome or too tedious for him if through his own effort he could promote or help the really deserving. Writers were perhaps the special object of his benevolence. Congreve, Gay, Steele, Pope, all had to thank him for timely help, in some cases for office, in others for help in publishing their literary works. As for himself, he received a financial result from only one of his books, "Gulliver's Travels," and this was achieved purely through Pope's practical assistance. A letter of distress from one of his literary friends received an immediate and generous answer. Sheridan says of him: "His constancy in friendship was such that he was never known to break any connexion of that sort till his faculties were impaired in the decline of life, except in the case of Steele, when he was perfectly justified from the ingratitude and insolence of his behaviour towards him." Indeed his notions of friendship were so exalted that he wished it might not be confined to the present life; for he says in one of his letters to Pope, "I have often wished that God Almighty would

be so easy to the weakness of mankind as to let old friends be acquainted in another state, and if I were to write Utopia for Heaven that would be one of my schemes."

Such was the warmth of his affection towards all those to whom he gave the name of friend. His friendship for Harley, however, was stronger and warmer than any of the others. The bond of brotherhood lightly established in the "Brother's Club" deepened and strengthened into the warmest friendship. The attempted assassination of Harley during the early years of their friendship reduced Swift to despair. "O dear M. D., my heart is almost broken, you will hear the thing before this comes to you," he writes to Stella immediately after the attempt. "I am in mortal pain for him . . . Pray pardon my distraction. I now think of all his kindness to me. The poor creature now lies stabbed in his bed by a desperate French Popish villain. Good-night, and God preserve you both, and pity me ; I want it."

This friendship suffered no decline throughout the years of their work together in spite of Harley's slowness to secure promotion for Swift. So strongly indeed did Swift feel the ties of affection that when, after Harley's downfall, there was some prospect of advancement for Swift he refused to entertain the thought of it, and preferred to retire with his friend into the country. Perhaps a letter written by him to Harley in 1714 throws strong light on the friendship between the two men. It is worth quoting almost at full length :—

“MY LORD,

“When I was with you, I have said more than once, that I would never allow quality or station made any real difference between men. Being now absent and forgotten, I have changed my mind : you have a thousand people who can pretend they love you, with as much appearance of sincerity as I ; so that, according to common justice, I can have but a thousandth part in return of what I give, and this difference is wholly owing to your station. And this misfortune is still the greater, because I always loved you just so much the worse for your station ; for, in your public capacity you have often angered me to the heart, but, as a private man, never once. So that, if I only look toward myself, I could wish you a private man to-morrow : for I have nothing to ask, at least nothing that you will give, which is the same thing : and then you would see whether I should not with much more willingness attend you in retirement, whenever you please to give me leave, than ever I did at London or Windsor. From these sentiments I will never write to you, if I can help it, otherwise than as a private person, or allow myself to have been obliged to you in any other capacity. The memory of one great instance of your candour and justice I will carry to my grave, that having been in a manner domestic with you for almost four years, it was never in the power of any public or concealed enemy to make you think ill of me, though malice and envy were often employed to that end. If I live posterity shall know that and more, which, though

you and somebody that shall be nameless seem to value less than I could wish, is all the return that I can make you. Will you give me leave to say how I would desire to stand in your memory? As one, who was truly sensible of the honour you did him, though he was too proud to be vain upon it, as one who was neither assuming, officious, nor teasing : who never wilfully misrepresented persons or facts to you, nor consulted his passions when he gave a character ; and, lastly, as one, whose indiscretions proceeded from a weak head and not an ill heart. I will add one thing more, which is the highest compliment I can make, that I never was afraid of offending you, nor am now in any pain for the manner I write to you in. I have said enough : and, like one of your *levée*, having made my bow, I shrink back into the crowd."

This letter, perhaps, suffices to ameliorate the severity of the criticism which we are compelled to make on Swift's general treatment of his social superiors. It is the expression of deep, strong affection from the heart of a man who was little wont to give voice to his emotions, and preferred rather to pass before the world as one having none of these things. It is the voice of the man so little recognized in the Swift of history, whose days could be darkened with gloom by a sad story and who, when Stella lay dying, could not bear to witness her last moments, and on the night of her funeral had to have another room than the one from which he could see the lights of the church.

It was not, however, only the loss of his greatest friends which could fill him with sorrow. Again and again it happened that the death of a friend outside his inmost circle, perhaps a mere acquaintance, overshadowed him completely for days. His was a mind almost too sensitive to grief, responding too easily, perhaps, to the sorrow of others; it is pre-eminently the defect of the ultra-human disposition, for it involves too great a strain on the temperament. The unexpected death of young Harrison, for whom he had obtained some Government post, threw him into despair. "Think what grief this is to me! I could not dine with Lord Treasurer, nor anywhere else: but got a bit of meal towards evening. No loss ever grieved me so much; poor creature!" The death of Lady Ashburnham, daughter of the Duke of Ormond, wrings from him a heartbroken exclamation. "I hate life when I think it exposed to such accidents: and to see so many thousand wretches burdening the earth while such as her die, makes me think God did never intend life for a blessing."

Any misfortunes to his numerous *protégés* were considered in the light of personal troubles. The financial difficulties of Mrs. Anne Long, who is frequently mentioned in the Journal, caused him much anxiety, and her death later was a blow to him. Lord Orrery, with a view to his discredit, talks of his various mistresses, meaning to cast a slur on Swift's precarious charities, for many were the old dames whom he took under his protection and he would establish one with an apple-stall,



another with a pedlar's basket, refusing to pauperize them. He must have received many a blessing from them. His charity, moreover, began at home, for many were the occasions on which the lazy rogue, Patrick, his manservant, was forgiven. The domestic picture of the great politician, with the world at his feet and society listening open-mouthed to every word he uttered, coming home to two rooms, badly lighted and badly heated, to be at the mercy of this drunken dependant, contains a humorous as well as a pathetic element. Stella's tears must sometimes have been mingled with laughter at the quaint descriptions to which she was treated; the great Swift coming home to find his rooms newly washed at ten o'clock in the evening, so that he must perforce go to bed sneezing and wake in the morning with a violent cold: Swift the ascetic reduced to greater depths of asceticism than ever he could wish for, by having to retire supperless to bed owing to the vagaries of his servant: the irate master swearing to dismiss the "blackhearted scoundrel" when he presented himself in a drunken condition, and forgiving him once more half an hour afterwards: the economist who haggled over the price of a wig, being presented with a bill for gold lace for his servant's livery, and after an hour's storming good-humouredly yielding, to the rogue's satisfaction; the bitter misanthropist finding a lame bird in his servant's room, and tending it and restoring it to health. He had also a system of lending to poor working men

small sums of money at low interest in order that they might either establish themselves in business or perhaps free themselves from some special difficulty. This system, however, which he proposed to carry on strictly commercial lines, did not answer, for his debtors were frequently unwilling to pay, and the onus of merciless usurer fell on Swift's shoulders, while his whole object was to help. He, therefore, had to give up this form of benevolence. He never learnt the lesson which humanity has to teach, that altruism *per se* is an error in judgment; that the world will not be governed by reason and common-sense so long as the spirit of love is withheld. Human nature, while it welcomes love, resists management. Swift, who, in his social ideas, had to stand alone in the eighteenth century, would have been heartily welcomed in the twentieth among a number of workers of a similar turn of thought. He was in advance of his age in this as in his attitude to women and his conception of their position in society. His ideal of the womanly character was equally high. He exacted chiefly from them purity of soul and idea. His refusal to allow any coarse element to intrude in the presence of women has been mentioned in another connection. He satirized in "polite conversation," the unfortunate but popular custom of introducing innuendo into everyday conversation. If any of his women friends departed from this ideal he was much shocked. "I had a letter from Mrs. Long that has quite turned my stomach against her:

no less than two nasty jests in it, with dashes to suppose them." Probably this error materially affected Swift's opinion of her, though hitherto it had been a high one, compounded of sympathy with her misfortunes and respect for her courage under difficulties.

In his treatment of women he recognized one factor in them which hitherto had been overlooked, partly, perhaps, because of the defects in a woman's training in the past; this one factor which he urged again and again was their capacity for companionship to men, and his whole life was a standing illustration of this opinion, and in this he belonged to our own century.

In Swift's friendship with Stella, perhaps, we find the chief reason for that world-wide fame which he has attained. The history of this friendship is the history of a man's need of companionship, of a woman's response to that need, nothing more. It is, perhaps, only one among many friendships of a like nature, famous because Swift was a great man, and stood in the forefront of life's stage. But there must be many such which historically pass unheeded and yet may be a source of pleasure and misery to those who are the subject of them.

Wiseacres with a total ignorance of psychology scout the possibility of these friendships. They shake their heads wisely and say that every friendship between a man and a woman must end in love; they maintain this opinion in the face of every fact which proves the opposite. They would

insist on maintaining it if the world consisted entirely of these friendships and Cupid had left the stage for ever. They do not, however, deserve serious consideration. These alliances between men and women are based on a psychological fact frequently omitted in human calculations. Some men have in them moral and mental characteristics to which they find no response in the character of their male friends, some women have such characteristics to which they find no response in their women friends. Nor is this true merely of the mannish woman or the effeminate man. In each case the expression of such attributes is met by a dead wall, an unsympathetic blank. Sometimes this forms the greater part of a character, call it what you will, the woman's mind in a man, the man's mind in a woman. It is possibly the ideal perfection of the qualities which ought to be found in a man or woman. If this demand in the soul of either is negatived or refused, through conventions or other external convenience for the unthinking majority (for we grant that conventions are based on a truth, though they have become a lie), the result is pre-eminently disastrous for the mind making the demand, just as the denial of food is bad for the body.

We have barely learnt the alphabet of psychology. It is perhaps an impossibility for the mind of the Teuton to understand the necessity of it.

On the sound of Stella's name perhaps we hang, unwilling to let slip the last sweet echo. It is one of

the happiest and, at the same time, most unfortunate of names. It is the name of one of those women who have met with the world's most heartfelt approval and deepest reprobation, with the world's scornful blame and saddest pity. And why? Because she followed the natural dictates of her heart in an unconventional manner. Let those who stoop the knee in the temple of the redoubtable god Convention beware that they do not fall into a pit of their own digging. It is the illogical result of an illogical world, which takes for granted the vicious brilliance of charming women like Nell Gwyn, and offers them the homage of the ages, while it questions the sweet-souled purity of a pure woman like Stella, and blackens her name with vile insinuations. Nor is it content with this. It must perforce take as a burning question, to be discussed in every detail, with all the sickening nakedness of the divorce court, the question of Stella's reputed marriage with Swift. Again why? What does it matter to us or to preceding and succeeding ages, whether Swift was married to Stella or not. This one fact has no real bearing on the ethics of the case. The discussion is an impertinence of the worst type, and I do not propose to offer an opinion as to whether Swift and Stella were married, or remained true to those ideals of pure friendship which can exist between a man and woman without any question of marriage, or the love which makes such a demand.

Esther Johnson, the Stella of later years, was a dark-haired, dark-eyed child of six when Swift

entered Sir William Temple's household as secretary. Swift tells us "her father was a younger brother of a good family in Nottinghamshire, her mother of a lower degree." Esther was too pretty and attractive to pass unnoticed. She was perhaps the pet of the family, and indeed was so much noticed and cared for by Sir William Temple, that those who spend their time washing up in an obscure light in the back kitchen of history have declared that she was his natural daughter. The same greasemongers have pointed to Swift as a natural son of Temple, and assigned this as a reason against the possibility of marriage between Swift and Stella. Their theories may be disregarded.

Stella was a fragile child at this age. Probably this was why he undertook her education, for possibly sedentary pursuits were more suitable for her delicate health than more active ones.

From this early age she was his chief companion in the Temple household, a fact which renders all the more pathetic the resolution written down in his notebook a few years later not to let young people, especially children, come near him. It is coupled with a resolution not to marry a young woman—nor force his company on the young. His foresight, even at this age, warns him against the time-worn error of carping at the present to the advantage of the past, and this he resolves not to do. At the same time these resolutions made for a later age point, perhaps, to some premature maturity of thought. Swift was one of those men of whom we can only say that they

are born old, their judgments are mature, and their time and thought devoted to the interests of a great world rather than to their own, at an age when many young men think only of love and sport. Therefore it did not seem absurd to him, when a young man, to make resolutions for middle age. This mature outlook on humanity frequently, as in Swift's case, accompanies that much abused, much suffering victim known as the artistic temperament, which has more method in its madness than the most boasted sanity. It has also a conscience. The artistic conscience results in the perfection of achievement, and scorns the petty and numerous malformations of the so-called practical whose fretting hurry can only result in deformity both of soul and achievement. The artistic temperament alone produces great results. The soul of the artist is that which we find in great saints and great sinners, but it is one and the same soul. It is the soul capable of giving up everything for one object, whatever the object: with Swift the object, sought and gained, was the lasting good of his fellowmen.

On the death of Temple Stella's fortune amounted to £1500, the interest on which, Swift tells us, "was but a scanty maintenance in so dear a country for one of her spirit. Under this consideration, and indeed very much for my own satisfaction, who had good friends and acquaintances in Ireland, I prevailed with her and her dear friend and companion, to draw what money they had into Ireland, besides the advantage of returning it, and all necessities of life at half the

price. They complied with my advice, and soon after came over: but I, happening to continue some time longer in England, they were much discouraged to live in Dublin, where they were wholly strangers: she was at that time about nineteen years old, and her person was soon distinguished. But the adventure looked so like a frolic, the censure held for some time, as if there were a secret history in such a removal; which, however, soon blew off by her excellent conduct."

Perhaps herein hangs a tale. There was undoubtedly room here for the pleasant machinations of Dame Gossip, who is daughter to a microbe imperceptible to the honest mind. Swift, with his experience of the world, knew this only too well, and throughout Stella's life in Ireland took the utmost care to avoid giving any opportunity for the ill-natured. Thus he never saw Stella except in the presence of Mrs. Dingley, her companion, and addressed his letters to both, so that the letters known collectively as the "Journal to Stella" are written both to Stella and her companion. It may be as well to remark that the name Stella used here is an anachronism, as Swift did not give this name to Esther Johnson until after his four years' residence in London which terminated in 1713. For the sake of convenience, however, we will speak of her from now as Stella.

It is interesting to note how different in those respects was Swift's treatment of Miss Vanhomrigh, and it points to the extreme care which he exercised



over Stella and every detail of life as it affected her. To Miss Vanhomrigh Swift left the responsibility of her own discretion, though again and again he warned her against foolish acts and with her he merely used the precaution necessary from his own point of view. Stella herself testifies to his constant care of her.

“When men began to call me fair,  
You interposed your timely care :  
You early taught me to despise  
The ogling of a coxcomb's eyes ;  
Shewed where my judgment was misplaced ;  
Refined my fancy and my taste.”

With regard to suitors, perhaps Swift was a relentless guardian. The story goes that one of Stella's first admirers, the Rev. Dr. Tindall, met with small mercy at his hands. Swift naturally was unwilling to let Stella marry any one beneath her in intellectual attainments, for he saw that in her intellect predominated over heart, and, if she were married to a fool, life would be a perpetual misery to her. Certainly in her case, while the companionship of a brilliant man was a happy thing, marriage with either a fool or a genius would in all probability have proved unfortunate.

The portrait of Stella, which must have been painted during the early years of her residence in Ireland, represents a young woman of regular features and well-developed figure. Her eyes are rather full, with perhaps that expression of wonder in them with which Stella, an essentially thoughtful woman, must have regarded life. Her hair waves

loosely back from a fine forehead whose breadth expresses intellectual power, and whose height implies the power of original thought and imagination. It is presumably the face of a woman who would have little regard for feminine smallness, and would be well fitted to be a companion of a man of brilliant intellect. Her mouth is distinctly humorous, perhaps slightly sensuous. Reasonable, clear-headed, impassionate, she was well suited to the *rôle* which she was allowed to play, without any detriment to her own happiness and very much to the increase of Swift's pleasure and comfort, for she was the one friend to whom he would look for unflinching sympathy and appreciation in every crisis of his life either of happiness or misfortune. "She was but little versed," says Swift, "in the common topics of female chat; scandal, censure and detraction never came out of her mouth: yet among a few friends, in private conversation, she made little ceremony in discovering her contempt of a coxcomb, and describing all his follies to the life: but the follies of her own sex she was rather inclined to extenuate or to pity." He tells a story of her intrepid coolness in danger. "With all the softness of temper that became a lady, she had the personal character of a hero. She and her friend having removed their lodgings to a new house, which stood solitary, a parcel of rogues armed, attempted the house, where there was only one boy. She was then about four and twenty: and having been warned to apprehend some such attempt, she



STELLA

FROM THE "SATURDAY MORNING" BY J. M. W. TURNER

1817



learned the management of a pistol, and the other women and servants being half dead with fear, she stole softly to her dining-room window, put on a black hood to prevent being seen, primed the pistol fresh, gently lifted up the sash, and taking her aim with the utmost presence of mind, discharged the pistol, loaded with bullets, into the body of one villain who stood the fairest mark. The fellow, mortally wounded, was carried off by the rest and died the next morning, but his companions could not be found." Perhaps we are foolish enough to wish that Stella had missed her aim, but at any rate, she has established her character for coolness. Coldness of temperament was the sort which is endowed with that extreme faithfulness of disposition which so frequently finds its best manifestation in friendship, and is seldom capable of meanness or treachery. She was a woman of few friends, as Swift explains. "From her own disposition, at least, as much as from the frequent want of health, she seldom made any visits, but her own lodgings, from before twenty years old, were frequented by many persons of the graver sort, who all respected her highly, upon her good sense, good manners, and conversation. Among these were the late Primate Lindsay, Bishop Lloyd, Bishop Ashe, Bishop Brown, Bishop Sterne, and Bishop Pulleys, with some others of later date; and indeed the greatest number of her acquaintance was among the clergy."

Her one woman friend appears to have been Rebecca Dingley, who lived with her throughout

the whole of her life in Ireland. The two ladies always lived in lodgings, exchanging their own for those of Swift during his absence. This arrangement was due partly to a desire for economy, partly, no doubt, to the fact that it afforded Swift a better opportunity of keeping an eye on his adopted ward. Their goings out and their comings in were known to him as were his to them, for the most part. Every detail of their lives appears to have been of unfailing interest to him. Their financial affairs were watched over by his agent.

More than this Swift supplemented Mrs. Dingley's income by an allowance of £20 a year, thus enabling Stella to enjoy her companionship without any difficulty. Their small trials and enjoyments all receive their due notice in Swift's letters to Stella: their success at cards, their small gains and losses, do not escape his remark. "You win eight shillings! you win eight fiddlesticks. Faith, you say nothing of what you lose, young woman!" All their mutual acquaintances are commented on; there is much gossip of a kindly nature in his daily journal. No detail is allowed to escape. "Good morrow, my mistresses both, good morrow. Stella will be peeping out of her room at Mrs. Caudres down upon the folks as they come from church: and there comes Mrs. Probeyard, that's my Lady Southwell, and there's Lady Betty Rochfort." We know that Stella provided Swift with this intelligence from references in his letters, but so far none of her correspondence has been discovered. We would give the world to

be allowed to see her letters to him. Sometimes she evidently expresses a desire to know more of politics. "You want politics: faith, I can't think of any, but maybe at night I may tell you a passage." At times she is not quite satisfied with his account of his friends. Once she has certainly asked to know more about the Vanhomrigh family. Her health is a never-failing source of anxiety to him. He constantly prescribes for her, and is perpetually trying to impress on her the necessity of fresh air and exercise, in accordance with his own example, for he had followed this practice ever since the days at Moor Park, when he would run up the hill behind the house every two hours. "I desire in two days," he writes, "if possible, to go and live at Chelsea for the air, and put myself under a necessity of walking to and from London every day." He jeers at the Irish ladies for their deficiency in this respect. "When I pass the Mall in the evening it is prodigious to see the number of ladies walking there, and I always cry shame at the ladies of Ireland who never walk at all, as if their legs were no use but to be laid aside." He urges the beauty of Nature as an incitement. "Don't you begin to see the flowers and blossoms of the field?" Again, later, "Do you know that about our town we are mowing already, making hay, and it smells so sweet as we walk through the flowery meads." Walking was his sole exercise, and proved to him, as to many other people, a constant source of pleasure, acting as a direct counteraction to the mental strain which he had perpetually to undergo.

He has another reason ! “ The days are long enough to walk in the Park after dinner, and so I do whenever it is fair. This walking is a strange remedy. Mr. Prior walks to make himself fat, and I to bring myself down : he has generally a cough which he only calls a cold : we often walk round the Park together.” He knows, too, that every detail affecting him will be interesting to Stella, and he has provided us with a familiar picture of himself. His little economies are a shock to the feelings of those who have grown used to looking on him as the leading statesman of his day. “ Come, come, young women, I keep a good fire : it costs me twelvepence a week, I fear something more : pay me, and I’ll have one in my bedchamber too.” It pleases him to pretend that they are acting the critic. His great mind, as is always the case, loves to have its little pretences ; the mind which is strung to the highest issues is always capable of the greatest relaxation, therefore it is not true to say that little things please little minds ; little things please great minds. Hence Swift, in writing to Stella, loves to linger on the days of their life at Moor Park, when the child of six prattled in that baby language known only to the initiated, and in many of his letters he has recourse to this little language. Dear good people have chosen to take this as a proof of his insincerity. But we will say no more of this little fallacy. There are little jokes to be made. “ April 1. The Duke of Buckingham’s horse fell down last night with an earthquake, and is half swallowed up ; won’t you go



and see it? An April fool, an April fool, Oho young woman. Well, don't be angry, I'll make you an April fool no more, till next time." The smallest story finds its place. "Going this morning to town I saw two old lame fellows walking to a brandy shop, and when they got to the door, stood a long time complimenting who should go in first: though this be no joke to tell, it was an admirable one to see." He likes to draw pen pictures of himself. "And now let us come and see what this dreary letter of Mrs. D. says. Come out, letter, come out from between the sheets; here it is underneath, and it won't come out. Come out again, I say: so there. Here it is. What says Presto to me pray? says it. Come and let me answer for you to your ladies. Hold up your head then, like a good letter."

"It has snowed terribly all night, and in vengeance cold, I am not up yet, but cannot write long, my hands will freeze. 'Is there a good fire, Patrick?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Then I'll rise: come, take away the candle.' You must know I write in the dark side of my bed-chamber and am forced to have a candle till I rise, for the bed stands between me and the window, and I keep the curtains shut this cold weather. 'So, pray let me rise, and, Patrick, take away the candle.'" Again, "I went last night to put some coal on my fire after Patrick had gone to bed, and there I saw in a closet a poor linnet he had brought over to Dingley. It cost him sixpence, and is as tame as a dormouse. I believe he does not know he is a bird: where you put him there he stands, and seems

to have neither hope nor fear; I suppose in a week he will die of the spleen."

He likes to think that their thoughts are centred on him; "and so you kept Presto's little birthday, I warrant. I would to God I had been in the hearth rather than here where I have no manner of pleasure, nothing but eternal business on my hands." He assures them that his thoughts are on them. "Do you know that every syllable I write, I hold my lips just for all the world as if I were talking in our own little language to M. D. Faith, I am very silly, but I can't help it for my life." "No, faith, you are just here upon this little piece of paper, and therefore I see and talk with you every evening constantly, and sometimes in the morning."

He tells them all his plans, keeps them *au fait* with the political world. They are familiar with the inner circle, and know long before the general public, the possible issue of events. His literary works are not anonymous to them. For the most part they anticipate the public in knowledge of the nature of the several works. Swift's political friends are more than mere names to them, they know the change which must ensue in his circle, and understand its significance. "Prithee, don't you observe," he writes in May, 1711, "how strangely I have changed my manner and company of living? I never go to a coffee-house. You hear no more of Addison, Steele, Harley, Lady Lucy, Mrs. Finch, Lord Somers, Halifax, etc."

He is always ready to sympathize with them

and soothe Stella's apprehension. Again and again he assures her that her happiness is his first care. "I will say no more, but beg you to be easy, till fortune takes her course, and to believe that M. D.'s felicity is the great end I aim at in my pursuits. And so let us talk no more on this subject, which makes me melancholy, and that I would fain divert. Believe me, no man breathing at present has less share of happiness than I: I do not say I am unhappy at all, but that everything here is tasteless to me for want of being what I could be." This is the canker in the bud—the side-light thrown on the brilliant scene of the political stage—the lining of the coat decorated with the jewels of political favour. Swift's distrust of his position is no new thing to Stella. The consciousness of their faithful love for him has before been presented to him in pleasing contrast to his faithless friends in the great world. "Farewell, my dearest lives and delights, I love you better than ever if possible, as hope saved, I do and ever will. God Almighty bless you ever and make us happy together. I pray for this twice every day, and I hope God will hear my poor hearty prayers. Remember, if I am used ill and ungratefully, as I have formerly been, 'tis what I am prepared for and shall not wonder at it. Yet I am now envied and thought in high favour, and have every day numbers of considerable men, teasing me to solicit for them, and the ministry all use me perfectly well, and all that know them say they love me. Yet I can count

upon nothing, nor will but M. D.'s kindness. They think me useful: they pretended they were afraid of none but me: and that they resolved to have me, they have often confessed this, yet all makes little impression upon me."

Swift's doubt of the stability of his position no doubt had a very depressing effect on Stella, whose outlook must have been shadowed and brightened in accordance with his prospects. For the small interests of her household would not be enough to satisfy a woman of her mental power, and her vision must always have been straining towards that greater world in which the friend in whom all her hopes centred was moving. The small-talk of the circle in which she moved, the Walls, the Stoytes, etc., would not be enough to satisfy her. We are assured by Swift that "By returning very few visits, she had not much company of her own sex, except those whom she most loved for their easiness, or esteemed for their good sense, and those, not insisting on ceremony, came often to her. But she rather chose men for her companions, the usual topics of ladies' discourse being such as she had little knowledge of, and less relish. Yet no man was upon the rack to entertain her, for she easily descended to anything that was innocent or diverting. News, politics, censure of family management or towntalk, she always diverted to something else: but these indeed seldom happened, for she chose her company better: and therefore many who mistook her and themselves, having solicited

her acquaintance, and finding themselves disappointed, after a few visits dropped off: and she was never known to inquire into the reason, nor asked what was become of them."

Such indifference to casual acquaintance points to the fact that her chief interests were outside them. The Dublin ladies, languid and incapable of much exertion either mental or physical, must have looked on Stella as a prodigy, incomprehensible to the ordinary intelligence. Her calmness in emergency was proverbial, for we are told by Swift that fainting was unknown to her, and that she did not scream or run at the sight of a mouse. Thus it was that Swift could turn to her in every tempest, for there is no truer haven for storm-tossed manhood than the mind of a woman to whom feminine pettiness and scheming are unknown, and who has an outlook beyond and above the small concerns of life, without necessarily neglecting them.

Swift's knowledge of Stella, therefore, whose coldness of temperament resulted in a natural aptitude for friendship, was not enough to prepare him for a friendship with another woman of an entirely different temperament. Esther Vanhomrigh, whose misfortune lay purely in her own character, was ill-suited to become Swift's pupil, entirely unsuitable for friendship with him or any other man. Mrs. Vanhomrigh's family consisted of two sons and two daughters, of whom Esther was not yet twenty and Molly a little younger. They lived in a house in

Bury Street, St. James', near Swift's lodgings, and their drawing-room formed the centre of a society of distinguished people. They were fond of society, and very hospitable, and here Swift met many of his friends, among them Sir Andrew Fountaine, Lady Betty Berkeley, and others: he was a regular guest, and admitted on terms of a good deal of intimacy; probably he was there almost daily. He looked on it as one of the houses where he could claim hospitality at any time. In return for this he undertook to some extent the education of the two girls, whom he found intelligent and worthy of his trouble. Esther's capacity was beyond the average, and her much-developed intellect tended perhaps to destroy her sound judgment. She, like Stella, was removed from friends of her own sex and age, by her incapacity to sympathize with their pursuits; her interests lay in wider issues. Books were her companions, for her age, of necessity, prevented her from seeing much of men, whose friendship she preferred. Thus Swift was the first male friend with whom there had been for her any possibility of untrammelled intercourse. He was then forty-three, a man whose experience and brilliant powers of conversation rendered him singularly attractive to this girl of twenty. Probably, too, his notice flattered her, for she was at the age when her mind had crossed the barrier between girlhood and womanhood, and was in need of a guiding hand to prevent her from being the victim of those pitfalls into which the morbidly minded are so apt to stray, namely,



VANESSA'S BOWER, THE ABBEY, CELLBRIDGE



THE ABBEY, CELLBRIDGE, THE RESIDENCE OF HESTER VANHOMRIGH





introspection and unhealthy asceticism of one kind or another. Her portrait represents her as of the weak intellectual type. It was above all important for Esther, as for so many other girls who are allowed to pore over books to the exclusion of humanity, that at the age when the mind perforce turns to humanity and wearies of books, there should have been a helping hand, but for her it should have been the hand of a wise woman, of any one rather than a man like Swift, whose qualities were exactly of the sort to be dangerous through their attractiveness. She was weak, he was strong; she was passionate and impetuous, he was calm, cool and logical; she was wildly romantic, he was singularly reasonable and deficient in romance. From the very force of his character, which made all women bow to him as to a superior being, he reduced her to the position of abject slave and worshipper, and that most deadly of all diseases *Schwärmerei* took possession of her. Let those take pity on her who realize the insidious nature of this terrible moral weakness, the existence of which in women of every age and occupation points to great defects in their training. Had her mother been wise she would have recognized that the only possible end of this must be disastrous for Esther; but those were not the days of experimental education, and mothers did not carry about with them psychological thermometers. She was therefore allowed to go on unheeded until Swift found to his dismay that his lessons were disregarded, while he himself received the most profound attention

from his pupil. He judged rightly that the days of books were at an end for her, though he was wrong in thinking that her feeling for him was a passing fancy. Incidentally he had introduced an ethical tone into his lectures which perhaps tended to the increase of the unfortunate attachment.

Miss Vanhomrigh's open confession of love to him, justified to her by Swift's own teaching that your opinions and feelings should never be concealed, took him entirely by surprise. There must have flashed into his mind at that moment the picture of the calm, proud, yet loving woman then living in his own rooms at Dublin, who had been his constant friend and companion for more than twenty years with perfect satisfaction to them both. No wonder that, judged in the light of Stella's dignity and womanliness, this ardent unreasoning display of passion was incomprehensible to him. He had known on terms of intimacy a great number of women in the course of the last twenty years, but none had been guilty of such an indiscretion, and his power of psychological perception was not great enough to make him understand. He merely put it on one side, hoping that it would pass away. Thus a few months passed, leaving Esther in a miserable state of uncertainty, while Swift perhaps went on unheeding. At the end of that time, however, he discovered that time had wrought no change in her feelings, and he saw that he must take some definite step to improve matters. Marriage with her or with any one else was entirely out of the question for him ;

if such a thing had been possible Stella would undoubtedly have been his choice. He therefore wrote the poem known as "Cadenus and Vanessa," in which he tried to show her finally that all hope of love between them was impossible. This should have been enough, as Swift thought, but it was not. He has been much blamed for temporizing. But surely he is not to blame. There are two possible reasons for the course he followed: he may not have understood the power that an unsatisfied passion has of consuming a man or woman body and soul; it was almost an impossibility for a man of his temperament to understand it. Or he may have thought, as the event proved, that any attempt to put an end forcibly to Esther's love for him would be extremely disastrous. He probably knew that interference by force does not put an end to love, it only tends to increase it. He therefore adopted a policy of not seeing her and of writing to her as little as possible. His departure from London helped him in this determination, but he was constantly recalled to a sense of his obligations. Letter after letter followed him urging him to write. "There is now three long weeks passed since you wrote to me. Oh! happy Dublin that can claim all your thoughts, and happy Mrs. Emerson that could hear from you the moment that you landed. Had it not been for her I should be yet more uneasy than I am. I really believe before you leave Ireland I shall give you just reason to wish I did not know my letters, or at least that I could not write: and I had rather you should wish so

than entirely forget me." A persistent determination to include Molly the younger sister in his communications only roused jealous replies. "Confess, have you once thought of me since you wrote to my mother at Chester? which letter I assure you I take very ill. My mother and I have counted the Molls and the Hessys: it is true the number is equal, but you talk to Moll and only say 'Now Hussy grumbles.' How can you indeed possibly be so ill-natured to make me either quarrel or grumble when you are at so great a distance that it is impossible for me to gain by doing so? Besides, you proposed the letter should be directed to me."

In the case of a woman of different character, pride would have stepped in to interfere. But passion was oblivious to all considerations of pride and delicacy. It had degenerated into mania, and there was no possibility of lessening it. Circumstances, moreover, now joined hands against Swift. The death of Mrs. Vanhomrigh in 1714 left the girls helpless in the hands of lawyers, for they were on bad terms with their brothers. Thus a heart-broken appeal from Esther, based on the plea of their helpless condition, roused Swift's feelings of chivalry. "You cannot but be sensible (at least in some degree) of the many uneasinesses I am slave to: a wretch of a brother, cunning executors and importunate creditors of my mother's—things I can no way avoid being subject to at present, and weighty enough to sink greater spirits than mine without some support. Once I had a friend that would see me sometimes, and either

commend what I did or advise me what to do, which banished all my uneasiness. But now, when my misfortunes are increased by being in a disagreeable place, among strange, prying, deceitful people whose company is so far from an amusement, that it is a very great punishment, you fly me, and give me no reason, but that we are amongst fools and must submit. I am very well satisfied we are amongst such, but I know no reason for having my happiness sacrificed to their caprice. You once had a maxim, which was to act what was right and not mind what the world said. I wish you would keep to it now. Pray what can be wrong in seeing and advising an unhappy young woman? I cannot imagine. You cannot but know that your frowns make my life insupportable. You have taught me to distinguish and then to leave me miserable. Now all I beg is that you will for once counterfeit (since you cannot otherwise) that indulgent friend you once were, till I get the better of these difficulties, for my sister's sake : for were not she involved, who, I know, is not able to manage them as I am, I have a nobler soul than to sit struggling with misfortune, when at the end I can't promise myself any real happiness. Forgive me : I beg you'll believe it is not in my power to avoid complaining as I do."

Mere gratitude to the late Mrs. Vanhomrigh for her kindness in the past demanded this return from her old friend. He acted as it was only possible to act under the circumstances, and went to the help of the two girls. It must have been, however, with a

great deal of hesitation, for Esther, a few months previously, had taken a step which could only arouse Swift's anger, as it added enormously to the difficulties of the situation. Her mother's death placed under her control a small estate in Ireland, and she determined to live in that country in order to be near Swift, and thus attempt to satisfy her miserable longing. A letter tells us that she called on Swift at Letcombe on her way to Ireland, which brought down on her a severe reproof. While Esther Vanhomrigh the woman rouses in us feelings of anger, Esther the lovesick and hysterical girl fills us with the deepest pity. Half an hour's thought at this juncture would have taught her that she was adding to her own misery by such a course, and would have made her realize the impossibility of her passion, for Swift had told her he could not marry her; but she was incapable of sane meditation on the subject, she was desperate. She was, moreover, without any friend to help her, for Swift hitherto had helped to advise her in every crisis. She refused to see that the more she saw of him or talked with him the more her feelings suffered. She let herself go completely and absolutely, and from this point perhaps we must look on her as incapable of self-control. We cannot, however, blame Swift for what happened, nor can he reasonably be made responsible for any part of this unfortunate episode in his life. It is useless to generalize, useless to say that one set of actions will invariably fit one set of circumstances, Swift could not have acted differently. Esther Vanhomrigh

was physically weak, both she and her sister died of consumption, and this probably accounted for her lack of balance. Swift's treatment would have met with success in many cases. It is difficult to think of any other course. Marriage with her, which he had given her no reason to expect, would probably have ended equally in disaster, for the hysterical, ill-balanced and jealous wife is a misery to her husband and all surrounding her, and there is no justification for the idea that marriage would have changed Esther's character.

For nine years after her appearance in Dublin Esther's hopeless passion went on. Her removal to Cellbridge had apparently no effect. Her letters during this time only point to a mind diseased and wholly given up to the one absorbing object. In 1720, she writes, "Is it possible that you will come and see me? I beg for God's sake you will: I would give the world to see you here (and Mollkin would be extremely happy)." Referring to some letter of Swift's, she says, "Tell me sincerely, did those circumstances crowd on you, or did you recollect them only to make me happy." Swift's assurances that he writes as often as he can, and that he has always for her "the same respect, esteem and kindness" as he has always possessed, are of no avail. She was at this time weighed down by her sister's illness. "Judge what a way I am now in, absent from you and loaded with melancholy on her score." She professes that she is unwilling to grieve. "Between us it is with the utmost regret that I now

complain to you, because I know your good-nature is such that you cannot see any human creature miserable without being sensibly touched. Yet what can I do? I must either unload my heart and tell you all its griefs, or sink under the inexpressible distress I now suffer by your prodigious neglect of me. It is now ten long weeks since I saw you : and in all that time I have never received but one letter from you and a little note with an excuse . . . Put my passion under the utmost restraint ; send me as distant from you as the earth will allow : yet you cannot banish those charming ideas which will ever stick by me whilst I have the use of memory : nor is the love I bear you only seated in my soul : for there is not a single atom of my frame that is not blended with it, therefore do not flatter yourself that separation will ever change my sentiments : I find myself unquiet in the midst of silence, and my heart is at once pierced with sorrow and love."

Her sister's death left Esther alone to brood over her misery, which was much aggravated by the report of Swift's marriage with Stella. Her last hope gone, she determined to injure in every way possible the object of her attachment. She cancelled her will, which had been made in favour of Swift, and then, as the story goes, was capable of a deed which can only condemn her. Some stories have it that she wrote to Stella asking her if she were married to Swift, others that she wrote to Swift, filling both letters with abuse. A third story has it that she went to see Stella to demand the truth from her in



person. It is impossible to know which contains the truth.

Whatever her action, Swift's anger on Stella's account was such that he refused to see Esther or write to her again. She died a few months later in 1723, having assigned as one duty to her executors the publication of Swift's letters to her, including the poem "Cadenus and Vanessa." This last act was of course that of a woman burning for revenge and wishing at all costs to injure the man who had hurt her. To those who judge her, I recommend her to mercy, but not to mercy at the expense of the man who did not wrong her, and whose part in the drama was the only possible part for him to take. Only one actor in the story deserves pity; Swift is capable of defending himself, his life is a sufficient defence, but on Stella the blow must have fallen with no light weight.

How far Stella knew the truth of the story we shall never know. Swift, who was sincere in all his dealings both with men and women, would certainly not have concealed his friendship with Esther Vanhomrigh from the woman from whom he hid nothing, with the exception of political matters, throughout his intercourse with her. The scarcity of the references to her in the *Journal* is quite natural. Probably out of respect for the younger woman he refrained from telling Stella of her lack of self-control and passionate self-surrender. His conception of a woman's character would prevent him from talking of it. Besides

he knew such a thing was only too likely to become exaggerated in a woman's mind, and might cause Stella unnecessary annoyance. Stella herself never listened to gossip of any sort, and her ideals of friendship would certainly lead her to reject with scorn any gossip about her greatest friend. Thus, probably, the facts immediately surrounding the death of Esther Vanhomrigh were a painful revelation to her, but no one can, with any sanity of judgment, think that they caused her to lose her faith in Swift. She had known Swift for more than thirty years, and she understood him perfectly; the affection of a lifetime could not be suddenly eradicated by unkind gossip. She probably saw the truth of the whole matter.

Melodramatic writers have represented a most tragic picture at this juncture, of Swift retiring for two months to hide his head, and of Stella beginning to languish with a broken heart. That he was ill at the time and much in need of rest we have no doubt, and sorrow for the woman for whom he had a genuine affection must have made him miserable, but surely there was no occasion for the tragic and sudden retreat depicted by his biographers. Stella, moreover, had been ailing for some time, she had always been in delicate health, and some few years before had begun probably that slow decline which ended fatally in 1728. She was forty-five or six and her father had died before he reached this age. Is there any great cause for surprise, therefore, in the death at forty-five of a

naturally delicate woman? There is something fatally tragic for Swift in the death of these two women within four years of each other.

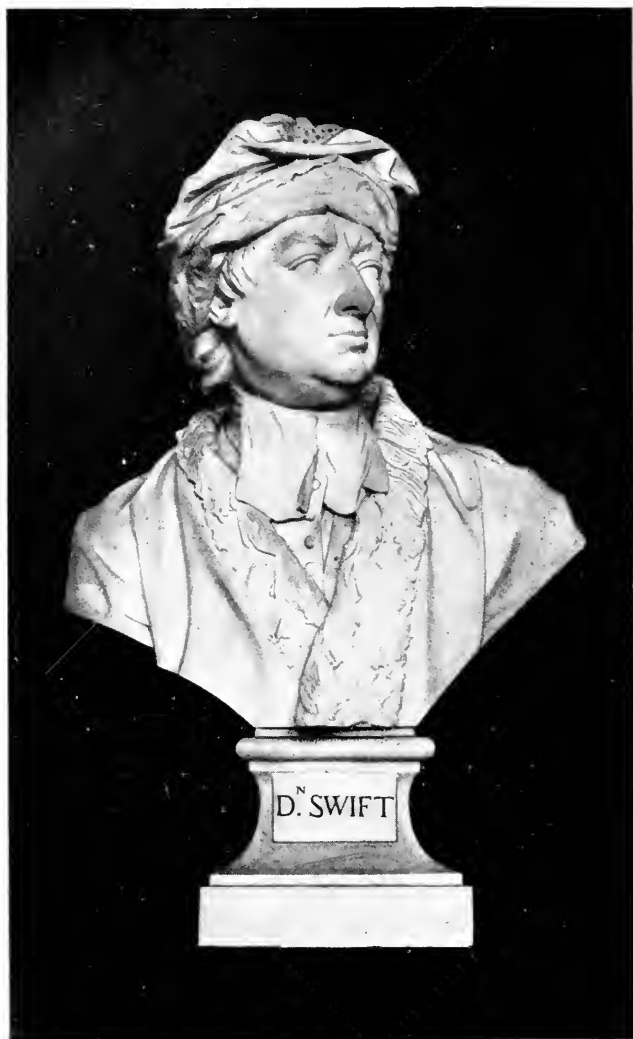
In 1726 Stella's failing health began to cause him the gravest anxiety, and for the next two years the thought of her approaching death cast a deep gloom over him. Few pictures can be sadder than that of the last two years of Stella's life. Death contains an element infinitely more pathetic for strong natures than for weaker ones, while, at the same time, they meet it more philosophically as the end of a struggle. The real tragedy, however, lies in this, that those who, through natural strength of character, have been able to override every obstacle and overcome every difficulty, are at last confronted by an element which they cannot hope to alter. Here were two beings, both of sufficient strength to make their own lives, each finding the other necessary to their happiness, suddenly confronted with the necessity of separation. Some may talk of Stella's prospect of greater happiness. Her own vitality and moral strength must have led her to find satisfaction in life, therefore, presumably the thought of death would not be one of unmitigated satisfaction. Swift looked forward to years of loneliness, deprived of the companionship which he felt necessary to his existence. "I think," he writes to a friend, "that there is not a greater folly than that of entering into too strict a partnership or friendship with the loss of which a man must be absolutely

miserable: but especially (when the loss occurs) at an age which is too late to engage in a new friendship." Perhaps it is the egoist's point of view, but are we not all egoists? Can there be greater loneliness than that of a temperament which finds no companionship save in its exact complement, and is therefore cut off entirely from others? This was the loneliness to which Swift saw himself condemned by the loss of the woman who had saved him from the most terrible blank possible. These last years were characteristic of their friendship. Swift expected Stella to find strength in herself for consolation. He saw comparatively little of her, the thought of her loss was too terrible for him, and thus she sank out of his life. He saw her four days before her death, then left her and waited for the end. We will leave him alone in his sorrow, to hear again and again—

“ the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,  
And the sobs of the mourners deep and low ;  
The weary sound and the heavy breath,  
And the silent motions of passing death.”

It is enough. Those who understand Swift will understand him now. Requiescat !





DEAN SWIFT

FROM THE BUST IN TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY, DUBLIN

## CHAPTER VI

### THE POET AND MORALIST

IT is impossible to separate the two elements of Swift's genius, verse or satire, they are indissolubly connected, for the one is in many cases the medium of the other. With Dryden we say, "Sir, you will never be a poet," and poet Swift could never be for many reasons. In his work imagination is lacking. The imagination to be found in "Gulliver's Travels" and the "Battle of the Books" is indeed but only one element of this quality. It is not poetical imagination. In "Gulliver's Travels" we find the imagination of the child narrator, and hence we have the powerful, almost inimitable appeal to the child's mind. It is only the childlike mind which can lead from one impossibility to another, plunge from one manifest absurdity into another. Yet it believes in itself, it has confidence in its own plausibility, and the creations of its own brain are real to it. Nothing can shake its belief in their existence. But the child's hand omits the twofold process required. The child lifts one veil, the mist which hides the panorama of this wonderful land, but there it must

perforce withdraw. The second curtain, which is drawn between the child's eyes and

“the blue far above us—so blue and so far !”

which shrouds the impenetrable mystery, and which can alone be lifted by the hand of him whose touch is sufficiently reverential, remains drawn before the child's gaze. And here Swift and the child are at one.

It is at this point that Swift's imagination stops. It is here that the poet's imagination begins. No one can be a poet with limitations such as Swift possessed. Nor can that man be a poet whose claim to poetical genius is based alone on the powerful and attractive narration of the absurd. The explorer in the Land of Imagination, he who has no rest for the sole of his foot, must for ever remain a traveller, but he cannot expect to know the country through which he travels, nor to have revealed to him its real beauty. He does not allow the sun of that country to play upon him, nor the streams to lave his limbs, nor the moonbeams with their cool clear light to refresh him after the heat of the day. He knows no rest in that land. Such is Swift. The poet, on the contrary, knows that land as his home. It is the centre of his aspirations, it is rest after the fulfilment of his aspirations.

But to none of the early eighteenth-century writers was this revealed. That which was solely of the spirit, if it had ever been manifest to them, would have been held up as a laughing-stock. It was the age of realism ;



of the physically real as opposed to the spiritually real, that which is born of the spirit was non-existent. It was an age of morality without religion, of the ideals of Rome rather than of Athens, and Swift was of his age, and lived for it, with perhaps a reaching-out to something beyond, which has found its fulfilment in our generation. The eighteenth century was "of the earth, earthy" in its ideals, and "of the earth, earthy," inasmuch as it formed the soil for the thought of the nineteenth century. It was, moreover, fruitful soil. It was, and wished to be, known by its fruits. In this sense, it was vulgarly practical. It was conscious solely of the tangible. Other elements were potential in it, but as yet were not visible. Herein we have the key to Swift's verse, and here we have the reason of its failure as poetry. Everything that he does must have its practical value, hence his verse is satirical. Satire has a certain definite end in view, a certain definite purpose, hence Swift adopts satire as a means to his purpose, which is the reform of humanity.

The poet, on the other hand, sings a song spontaneous in its expression of emotion. It is a part of his nature, part of himself. He writes that he may sing. If he teaches, the teaching is an accident. Conscious didacticism is the death of poetry. In poetry we have the sunshine on the water; in Swift's work, even at its lightest, we have fire, the caricature of sunshine, and it crackles with thorns under the pot. Just as work with no "body" in it could have no charm for Swift, so spirituality

must be lacking in his poems. He is a strange, almost unparalleled mixture in the human race. It is, as a rule, the spiritual character to which the body with all its functions is so natural a thing that it considers it a mere accident, so much apart from the real self that no action of this body would specially concern the real character. In the same way it looks on the bodies of other people. Hence, any reference to this external physical self is natural. This kind of spirituality cannot be claimed for Swift. He is essentially unspiritual, essentially moral rather than spiritual, and yet he has this way of looking at the human body. He is what we may call the perfectly natural man. This is shown in one way by his attitude to Nature. He makes no comment on it, regards it as a matter of course, as an element to be taken for granted. There is no poetical ecstasy on the subject of Nature in Swift's work, barely a mention of it. In his letters, where it occurs, it is part of some practical advice to Stella not to disregard the value of exercise in the open air.

He mentions the fact that the hedges are now green with the spring. This incidental mention of Nature is practically the only one. Swift knows nothing of the pseudo-pastoralism of the latter half of the century. If he had known it he would have rejected it with scorn as an element unworthy of the consideration of a serious writer. He would not have appreciated the motive of writing about what to him did not exist. A string of descriptive adjectives purporting to dignify a landscape which,

beautiful in itself, was insulted by description, and could only be seen in its true value by the mind of the poet, would have seemed to Swift merely unnecessary verbiage. Grandiose description, and blatantly unreal admiration of an artificial fountain placed in an equally artificial garden would only have called forth abuse from the mouth and pen of so sincere a writer.

This incarnation of sincerity has a serious purpose in view. Hence we have serious work. Satire in the hands of the natural man, with a serious purpose in view, probably becomes a thing which cannot be looked on with equanimity by the irresponsibly nice, who like to adopt an attitude of niceness which completely shuts out the real state of affairs. Hence Swift has attained a character for coarseness. A modern writer says, "He had an extreme and peculiarly disagreeable love of the coarse and the offensive." This is no light charge to bring against a writer such as Swift (Ainger, "Essays on Swift's Life and Genius"), either as writer or as man. It implies that Swift's habit of mind was coarse, and it is due to such light statement that this is the popular opinion held of him. It is emphatically untrue, and it rests with all who appreciate and therefore admire Swift's genius to refute these statements. Where would a man's coarseness appear but in the letters of everyday life? Throughout the *Journal to Stella*, which is the real reflection of Swift's mind, the mirror wherein he comes out clear and undimmed, there is not one coarse reference, nothing which a writer

of the ultra refined twentieth century might not have written to a friend. "But," says the censor, "they were written to a woman, and Swift would not have insulted her by coarseness." Again and again we are assured by Swift that Stella had the mind of a man. He would not, therefore, have refrained on these grounds. Moreover, she was his constant companion, the friend of every hour of his life, bad as well as good. Is it likely, then, that he would have taken pains to restrain his conversation when with her? for these letters are merely a conversation carried on for three years without intermission. Moreover, in Swift's letters to Mr. Sheridan, his most intimate friend, there are, perhaps, not more than three instances of coarseness. Does this point to habitual coarseness? Judge him in the light of the manners and habits of the present day, leaving out of the question the habits of mind of the eighteenth century and ask the question, What man or woman of Swift's age and varied experience has gone through life absolutely guiltless of a coarse expression or thought? So much for the coarseness of Swift as a private character. Coarseness is not habitual to him. Whatever we find in him as a private individual of the element of coarseness may, to a great extent, be attributed to the spirit of the century in which he lived, when men, if they were lacking in refinement, did not take the trouble to hide it under the flimsy veil of innuendo and suggestion.

Yet the charge against Swift's private character

would perhaps have been merged altogether had not his work as a public character again aroused the same accusation. The fact that he is before the world, in the forefront of the world's stage, standing in the full blaze of the footlights, does not make him coarser. It only serves, as in the case of other public characters, to intensify any quality or attribute which Swift happens to possess. There is an element in his poetry which can only be termed repulsive. It is realism carried to its utmost and deepest logical conclusion, realism with that depth, that inner meaning, which in the ideal is the sublime; to use a contradiction in terms, it is the sublimity of realism. And, as with every other element, every other attribute of Swift's work, it is there with its own definite serious purpose. Perhaps to admirers of Swift's life and genius the knowledge of this horrible capacity comes with an unpleasant surprise. They are accustomed to look on him as the ascetic, the man of moderation, a character whose strong self-control never lets him shrink from the great principles which form the guiding-line of his life. In his use of this element he has not relaxed this control. It has been proved that repulsiveness is not a habit of his mind.

We can, perhaps, trace four reasons for Swift's use of such an element in his work, though three can be at best only problematical. He is frequently at a loss for a rhyme, and interposes some coarse word or thought; sometimes a slight thought when worked out to its conclusion becomes intensely

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coarse, but yet he cannot refrain from following up the train he has already started; thirdly, he uses this element simply in a spirit of mockery, knowing that the superlatively nice will start back with a look of horror, and he rejoices in the fact that he can cause this, for Swift is always sincere, and he knows only too well that superlative niceness means nothing, or rather, that it means an absence of naturalness which will frequently put a bad construction on what is good and innocent. He is a master in the science of human nature.

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But his last reason is the most important. He is fully aware of the lack of refinement in the society of the day. He knows only too well that where we should look for refinement of manners, etc., we can only find coarseness and the absence of all beauty of nature. He knows that behind the gorgeous attire of the middle-aged, the simpering elegance of the young lady, the fastidious niceness of the youth, there is vice and corruption. He knows that pedantry is a cloak for a neglect of duty, that a superfluity of piety is a disguise for every form of evil. He is aware, too, that the apparently evil is frequently the really good. He is, moreover, determined to tear off this cloak of affectation, and to show up the realities of life. But he knows that the exhibition of unreality will not be enough. Realities are present with us every day, and they arouse no wonder or pity. He must have more than this. He will work out to their utmost conclusion, in all the bitterness of truth the unutterable horror of the

tendencies to evil in human nature. No one knew better than Swift what they were. That man who has trained himself to a habit of asceticism knows to the full the terrible capacity for evil in his own nature, and the need of a bitter struggle against it; he knows, too, that only by the conquest of it in himself can he possibly help others to overcome it. This is Swift's self-appointed task. By rendering more horrible the evil in human nature he will cure it. To the ignorant, to those who perhaps do not wish to understand his true motive, he has done this at the expense of his own character, his own reputation for decency. We are told, "He has conceived the awful idea of cursing the very image of his Maker; hooting and yelling at the flesh and blood which he, the author, was himself compelled to wear." There is no answer to this kind of criticism, but direction to the author thereof to read mark learn and inwardly digest the words and opinions of the writer at whom he scoffs. We will not ask this writer, and others like him, to take Swift off the dunghill on which they have placed him, nor to scrape off the mud with which they have adorned the greatest ornament of the eighteenth century. Let them only realize that Swift was, perhaps, the one frequenter of the Court in his century in whose presence no coarse language, no questionable jest, was allowed to be uttered. If such a thing happened, it happened at the expense of the deprivation of his company and brilliant wit, of which no one wished to be deprived.

Let them consider, too, the fact that throughout

Swift's work there is no vestige of immorality—by immorality I mean anything which can be termed a breach of order. Compare him with the dramatists immediately preceding and contemporary with him. Here we find unadulterated immorality purely for the sake of pleasure, not an attempt to expose it through realistic representation. In them it is recognized as a legitimate and profitable source of amusement. For this practice Swift cannot find reproof strong enough. He refers to it several times in words of strong condemnation. It receives the bitterest attack of all in "Gulliver's Travels." A satirical attack with intensely serious meaning is made in "Polite Conversation."

This work, in which the Introduction is the valuable asset, for the dramatic dialogue is merely a list of examples of the conversation in vogue among "polite" circles of the day, is perhaps meant to be an attack on what are termed the slighter defects in Society, which to Swift, as to other observers, arise from defects of character, and while they are manifested in individuals, reflect the moral condition of the class taken as a whole. "I have likewise, for some reasons of equal weight, been very sparing in double entendres: because they often put ladies upon affected constraints and affected ignorance. In short, they break, or very much entangle, the thread of discourse: neither am I master of any rules to settle the disconcerted countenances of the females in such a juncture: I can therefore only allow innuendoes of this kind to



be delivered in whispers, and only to young ladies under twenty, who being in honour obliged to blush, it may produce a new subject for discourse."

Again, on the use of exaggerated language, he is equally discerning. "Perhaps the critics may accuse me of a defect in my following system of 'Polite Conversation': that there is one great ornament of discourse whereof I have not produced a single example. . . . The defect I mean is, my not having inserted into the body of my book all the oaths now most in fashion for embellishing discourse, especially since it could give no offence to the clergy, who are seldom or never admitted to these polite assemblies. And it must be allowed that oaths well chosen are not only very useful expletives to matter, but great ornaments of style.

"What I shall here offer in my own defence upon this important article will, I hope, be some extenuation of my fault.

"First, I reasoned with myself, that a just collection of oaths, repeated as often as the fashion requires, must have enlarged this volume at least to double the bulk; whereby it would not only double the charge, but likewise make the volume less commodious for pocket carriage.

"Secondly, I have been assured by some judicious friends that themselves have known certain ladies to take offence (whether seriously or not) at too great 'profusion of cursing and swearing,' even when that kind of ornament was not improperly introduced; which, I confess, did startle me not a little, having

never observed the like in the compass of my own several acquaintance, at least for twenty years past. However, I was forced to submit to wiser judgment than my own.

“Thirdly, as this most useful treatise is calculated for all future times, I considered, in this maturity of my age, how great a variety of oaths I have heard since I began to study the world, and to know men and manners. And here I found it to be true, what I have read in an ancient poet—

‘For nowadays men change their oathes,  
As often as they change their clothes.’

“In short, oaths are the children of fashion ; they are in some sense almost annuals, like what I observed before of cant words, and I myself can remember some forty different sets. The old stock oaths, I am confident, do not amount to above forty-five or fifty at most ; but the way of mingling and compounding them is almost as various as that of the alphabet. . . .

“The flowers of wit, fancy, wisdom, humour, and politeness, scattered in this volume, amount to one thousand and seventy four. Allowing to every gentleman and lady thirty visiting families (not insisting upon fractions) there will want but a little of a hundred polite questions, answers, replies, rejoinders, repartees, and remarks, to be daily delivered fresh in every company for twelve solar months ; and even this is a higher pitch of delicacy than the world insists on, or has reason to expect. But I am altogether for exalting this science to its utmost perfection.”

He throws an interesting light on the amusements of the day. "Play," he says, "is supported upon the two great pillars of deliberation and action. The terms of art are few, prescribed by law and custom; no time allowed for digressions or trials of wit. Quadrille, in particular, bears some resemblance to a state of nature, which we are told is a state of war; wherein every woman is against every woman, the unions short, inconstant, and soon broke; the league made this minute without knowing the ally, and dissolved in the next. Thus, at the game of quadrille, female brains are always employed in stratagem, or their hands in action. Neither can we find that our art has gained much by the happy revival of masquerading among us, the whole dialogue in these meetings being summed up in one (sprightly, I confess, but) single question, and as sprightly an answer. 'Do you know me?' 'Yes, I do.' And 'Do you know me?' 'Yes, I do.' For this reason I did not think it proper to give my readers the trouble of introducing a masquerade merely for the sake of a single question, and a single answer; especially when to perform them in a proper manner, I must have brought in a hundred persons together of both sexes, dressed in fantastic habits for one minute, and dismiss them the next.

"Neither is it reasonable to conceive that our science can be much improved by masquerades, where the wit of both sexes is altogether broken up in contriving singular and humorous disguises; and their thoughts entirely employed in bringing

intrigues and assignations of gallantry to a happy conclusion."

His verse, apart from its value as satire and the light it throws on the customs of the day, need not be considered at great length as compared with the rest of his work. It forms an excellent example of the versification of the day ; it is essentially classical in character, metrically correct, rhyme and rhythm may be judged by the severest standard.

It bears, in fact, strong testimony to the character of the man ; it is controlled and severe in treatment.

Some slight proportion of it is autobiographical in character, and is hence valuable, especially that which deals with his relations with Stella and the trouble in Ireland. Other pieces are portraits. One of these, entitled *Traulus*, is excellent ; it may be added to the series of eighteenth-century portraits handed down by Pope, Addison, and others.

“ Positive and overbearing  
 Changing still and still adhering ;  
 Spiteful, peevish and untoward  
 Fierce in tongue, in heart a coward.  
 When his friends he most is hard on  
 Cringing comes to beg their pardon ;  
 Reputation ever tearing,  
 Ever dearest friendship swearing,  
 Judgment weak and passion strong  
 Always various, always wrong :  
 Provocation never waits  
 Where he loves or where he hates,  
 Talks whate’er comes in his head,  
 Wishes it were all unsaid.  
 Let me now the vices trace  
 From the father’s scoundrel race ;  
 Who could give the booby such airs  
 Were they masons, were they butchers ?

Herald lend the Muse an answer,  
From his atavus and grandsire.  
This was dexterous at his trowel,  
That was bred to kill a cow well ;  
Hence the greasy clumsy mien  
In his dress and figure seen ;  
Hence the mean and sordid soul,  
Like his body rank and foul ;  
Hence that wild suspicious peep,  
Like a rogue that steals a sheep ;  
Hence he learnt the butcher's guile  
How to cut your throat and smile ;  
Like a butcher doom'd for life,  
In his mouth to wear his knife,  
Hence he draws his daily food  
From his tenant's vital blood."

Other elements of his metrical work, all in the lighter vein, are found in the epigrams and riddles, which are very humorous in subject, and bear the same marks of restraint in metre and construction.

Beyond this, Swift's satire must be sought in his prose works. Here we have the Satirist at his best. His prose is marked by the same characteristic of self-restraint. Clear, concise sentences, in which every word has its full value.

Throughout English satire the two essentially classical modes have been retained ; the humorous kindly type of which Horace was the exponent, and the scathing, bitter invective by which Juvenal hoped to resuscitate the men and morals of his time. In Mediæval times Chaucer and Langland reproduced the methods of these two writers. After this time there is no striking figure on the stage of satiric display until we come to Elizabethan satire. Here the exponents of the grave and gay are Nash who, in

Pierce Pennilesse's "Supplication to the Devil," closely imitates Juvenal's earlier satires; and Bishop Hall, who writes in familiar commentary on men and manners after the manner of Horace.

After them come in close succession Marston, and of inferior merit as satirists Nash, whose works show a certain vitriolic bitterness. Donne of the metaphysical order, Dekker, who lacked discrimination, Jonson with his sledge-hammer, and Chapman, who showed personal spite and malevolence. During the Parliamentary war satire became a medium for Sectarian bitterness, and degenerated into the instinct of partisan antagonism. The exponents of the satire of this time were Marvell, Waller, Cowley, Oldham, Cleveland, and Butler, all varying in type from Horace to Juvenal. Of Butler it can only be said that there is little real satire in his work. He is a gay comedian, rousing laughter by his parlour tricks and extravagant humour; and occasionally he becomes the satirist, but this line of work does not meet with much favour in his eyes, nor is it the work best suited to his capacity.

Dryden is the great satirist of this time, and he has adapted to his use many forms of satire the elements of which he probably found *in embryo* in the work of his predecessors, for even though in this branch of work a great originality is needed, it is impossible to think of Dryden as the possessor of such an element. His great contribution to this branch of literature lay in this, that he formulated and systematized for English literature four distinct types

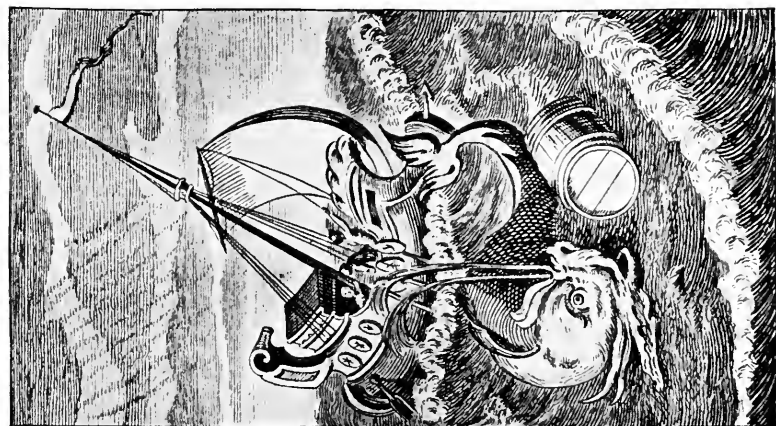
of satire. The first of these is "Absalom and Achitophel," in which a historic parallel is applied to the impeachment of the vices and abuses of the age; the Medal reverts to the rhetorical style so frequently found in Juvenilian satire; MacFlecknoe is the individual and personal type recurring to the style of Hudibras; the "Hind and the Panther" is a new development of the satiric fable. Herein lies Dryden's greatest value, he gave to British satire the impulse towards that final form of development which it received from the great satirists of the next century. Swift's three greatest satires are the "Tale of a Tub," the "Battle of the Books," and "Gulliver's Travels." These must be treated at some length, as they constitute the work by which he has become more than a name to the general public, but on these alone can Swift base his claim to people's affections. Here he is beloved by young and old alike. The great traveller into the unknown land pipes a wonderful story, and is followed by a host of tiny people who show no fear, but rather an enthusiastic delight as they enter the portals of Lilliput in close pursuit of the wonderful musician. Nor are they all in their childhood. Old as well as young follow in hot pursuit. Without incurring the reproach of a lack of seriousness, for here they can find also a serious import, they enter on the Fairyland and find marvels of which they never even dreamt before. Perhaps nothing has ever equalled or will ever equal "Gulliver's Travels" in its appeal to old and young alike. It comes almost at the end of his career,

it is the swan song, it is the greatest work he ever produced.

The "Tale of a Tub" does not enter the land of marvels. It is satire pure and simple. It is a strangely rambling discourse in which two definite threads occur. The one is literary satire, which takes the form of digressions; the other is a satire on the Church. The literary satire is really the more valuable, partly because it is universally true.

In reading the "Tale of a Tub" we are irresistibly reminded of a rough-shod pony galloping, trotting, or what it will, over country at the sight of which the more decorous steed stands aghast. It is as though we were jumping helter skelter, now rising into the air, now falling heavily, now rebounding, everything must feel the imprint of our unresisting unrestrained feet. The exuberance of youth is here, unrestrained by bit or bridle, embittered by continuous and unceasing application of the curb, of youth bleeding under the merciless use of Fortune's spur, yet withal driven on to greater effort. Savage and uncontrolled, refusing to see jest in the humour of Fortune, ready to pull to its lowest depths, to reveal in all its internal blackness, the white sepulchre of human institutions, yet ignorant of the inevitable result of such a course of action. The bitter pessimism of youth aims at every weakness, at every corruption. Yet it is optimism, bare and crude, without the philosophic intuition into realities which advanced age brings with it. In it we see a strong belief in those very institutions, a faith





FRONTPIECE TO 'THE TALE OF A TUB'



FRONTPIECE TO 'THE RATTLE OF BOOKS'



which asserts again and again that it attacks merely the abuses. There is a certain mature discernment which penetrates the excrescences to find the sterling worth beneath, and which avoids the fault, so generally found in early work, of indiscriminating confusion between use and abuse. This mature discernment, moreover, allows him to know wherein he may have offended.

He introduces his work in the following manner:—  
“The greatest part of that book was finished above thirteen years since in 1696, which is eight years before it was published. The author was then young, his invention at the height, and his reading fresh in his head. By the assistance of some thinking, and much conversation, he had endeavoured to strip himself of as many real prejudices as he could: I say real ones, because under the notion of prejudices, he knew to what dangerous heights some men have proceeded. Thus prepared, he thought the numerous and gross corruptions in Religion and Learning might furnish matter for a satire, that would be useful and diverting. He resolved to proceed in a manner that should be altogether new, the world having been already too long nauseated with endless repetitions on every subject. The abuses in Religion, he proposed to set forth in the Allegory of the Coats, and the three Brothers, which was to make up the body of the discourse. Those in learning, he chose to introduce by way of digression. He was then a young gentleman much in the world, and wrote to

the taste of those who were like himself; therefore, in order to allure them, he gave a liberty to his pen, which might not suit with maturer years, or graver characters, and which he could have easily corrected with a very few blots had he been master of his papers for a year or two before their publication.

“Not that he would have governed his judgment by the ill-placed cavils of the sour, the envious, the stupid, and the tasteless which he mentions with disdain. He acknowledges there are several youthful sallies which from the grave and wise may deserve a rebuke. But he desires to be answerable no further than he is guilty, and that his faults may not be multiplied by the ignorant, the unnatural, and uncharitable application of those who have neither candour to suppose good meanings, nor palate to distinguish true ones. After which, he will forfeit his life, if any one opinion can be fairly deduced from that book, which is contrary to Religion or Morality.

“Why should any clergyman of our Church be angry to see the follies and fanaticism and superstition exposed, though in the most ridiculous manner; since that is, perhaps, the most probable way to cure them, or at least to hinder them from further spreading? Besides, though it was not intended for their perusal, it rallies nothing but what they preach against. It contains nothing to provoke them, by the least scurrility upon their persons and their functions. It celebrates the

Church of England, as the most perfect of all others in discipline and doctrine; it advances no opinion they reject, nor condemns any they receive. If the clergy's resentment hang upon their hands, in my humble opinion they might have found more proper objects to employ them on; *nondum tibi defuit hostis*; I mean those heavy, illiterate scribblers, prostitute in their reputation, vicious in their lives, and ruined in their fortunes, who, to the shame of good sense as well as piety, are greedily read, merely upon the strength of bold, false, impious assertions, mixed with unmannerly reflections upon the priesthood, and openly intended against all religions; in short, full of such principles as are kindly received, because they are levelled to remove those terrors, that Religion tells men will be the consequence of immoral lives. Nothing like which is to be met with in this discourse, though some of them are pleased so freely to censure it. And I wish there were no other instances of what I have too frequently observed, that many of that reverend body are not always very nice in distinguishing between their enemies and their friends."

It is here where the genuine optimism of the writer is to be found. In spite of his persistent declaration that humanity is corrupt, yet he demands in the human race a far greater degree of disinterested love of mankind, than has ever been found by those who look for it. Here, again, we find the key to the writer's character, unhappy from the world's point of view, unhappy because his love

of humanity is disinterested enough and blind enough to lead him astray, so the world has it, into principles of action, which, for a man who was "much in the world," could only lead to chaos and ruin.

"Though I have been hitherto as cautious as I could, upon all occasions, most nicely to follow the rules and methods of writing laid down by the example of our illustrious moderns, yet has the unhappy shortness of my memory led me into an error, from which I must extricate myself before I can decently pursue my principal subject. I confess, with shame, it was an unpardonable omission to proceed so far as I have already done, before I had performed the due discourses expostulatory, supplicatory, or deprecatory, with my good lords the critics. Towards some atonement for this grievous neglect, I do here make humbly bold, to present them with a short account of themselves, and their art, by looking into the original and pedigree of the word, as it is generally understood among us, and very briefly considering the ancient and present state thereof.

"By the word critic, at this day so frequent in all conversations, there have sometimes been distinguished three very different species of mortal men, according as I have read in ancient books and pamphlets. For first, by this term was understood such persons as invented or drew up rules for themselves and the world, by observing which, a careful reader might be able to pronounce upon

the productions of the learned, from his taste to a true relish of the sublime and the admirable, and divide every beauty of matter, every style, from the corruption that apes it.

"In their common perusal of books, singling out the errors and defects, the nauseous, the fulsome, the dull, and the impertinent, with the caution of a man that walks through Edinburgh streets in a morning, who is indeed as careful as he can to watch diligently, and spy out the filth in his way. . . . These may seem, though very erroneously, to have understood the appellation of critic in a literal sense; that one principal part of his office was to praise and acquit, and that a critic, who sets up to read only for an occasion of censure and reproof, is a creature as barbarous as a judge, who should take up a resolution to hang all men that came before him upon trial.

"Again, by the word critic have been meant the restorers of ancient learning from the worms and graves and dust of manuscripts.

"Now, the vices of these two have been for some ages utterly extinct; and besides, to discourse any further of them, would not be at all to my purpose.

"The third and noblest sort is that of the True Critic, whose original is the most ancient of all. Every true critic is a hero born, descending in a direct line from a celestial stem by Momus and Hybris, who begat Zoilus, who begat Tigellius, who begat Etcaetera the elder, who begat Bentley, and

Rymer, and Wotton, and Perrault, and Dennis, who begat Etcaetera the younger.

“And these are the critics from whom the commonwealth of learning has in all ages received such immense benefits, that the gratitude of their admirers placed their origin in Heaven, among those of Hercules, Theseus, Perseus and other great deservers of mankind. But heroic virtue itself, hath not been exempt from the obloquy of evil tongues. For it hath been objected that those ancient heroes, famous for their combating so many giants and dragons and robbers, were in their own persons a greater nuisance to mankind than any of those monsters they subdued; and therefore to render their obligations more complete, when all other vermin were destroyed, should in conscience have concluded with the same justice upon themselves. Hercules most generously did, and hath upon that score procured to himself more temples and votaries than the best of his fellows. For these reasons I suppose it is why some have conceived, it would be very expedient for the public good of learning, that every true critic, as soon as he had finished his task assigned, should immediately deliver himself up to ratsbane or hemp or leap from some convenient altitude; and that no man’s pretensions to so illustrious a character should by any means be received before that operation were performed.

“Now, from this heavenly descent of criticism, and the close analogy it bears to heroic virtue, it is easy to assign the proper employment of a true,



ancient, genuine critic, which is to travel through this vast world of writings; to pursue and hunt those monstrous faults bred within them; to drag out the lurking errors, like Cacus from his den; to multiply them like Hydra's heads, and rake them together like Augeas' dung, or else drive away a sort of dangerous fowl, who have a perverse inclination to plunder the best branches of the tree of knowledge, like those Stymphalian birds that eat up the fruit."

The Tale is slight as narrative, and consists of the adventures of the three brothers Peter, Martin and Jack to each of whom the father left as sole legacy a new coat with these instructions: "Now you are to understand, that these coats have two virtues contained in them: one is, that with good wearing they will last you fresh and sound as long as you live: the other is that they will grow in the same proportion with your bodies, lengthening and widening of themselves, so as to be always fit. Here, let me see them on you before I die. So: very well, pray children, wear them clean, and brush them often. You will find in my will full instructions in every particular concerning the wearing and management of your coats; wherein you must be very exact, to avoid the penalties, I have appointed for every transgression or neglect, upon which your future fortunes will entirely depend. I have also commanded in my will, that you should live together in my house like brethren and friends, for then you will be sure to thrive and not otherwise."

Shortly afterwards the father died and the three sons set off to seek their fortunes. The three sons Peter, Martin and Jack are supposed to represent the Roman Catholic, the Anglican and the Dissenting bodies ; the will is supposed to be the New Testament. The story goes on that for seven years, (*i.e.* the first seven centuries) the brothers lived quietly together without disturbance, taking great care of their coats : after this they grew restless, and having set out to see the world came in contact with various distractions, or, in other words, corruption ensued in these sacred bodies and those in authority fell victims to covetousness, ambition and pride, or to the Duchess D'Argent, Mademoiselle de Grands Titres, and the Countess d' Orgueil.

The three ladies introduced the young men to all the customs of the town and Court so that they were soon thoroughly *au fait* with all the abuses imaginable.

Here, however, dispute arose between conscience and inclination. The brothers, in order to be quite fashionable, must worship at the shrine of a certain new sect. "They worshipped," says the writer, "a sort of idol, who, as their doctrine delivered, did daily create men by a kind of manufacturing operation. This idol they placed in the highest part of the house, on an altar erected about three feet : he was shewn in the posture of a Persian emperor, sitting on a *superficies*, with his legs interwoven under him. This god had a goose for his ensign : whence it is that some learned men pretend to deduce his original from

Jupiter Capitolinus. At his left hand, beneath the altar, Hell seemed to open, and catch at the animals the idol was creating : to prevent which, certain of his priests hourly flung in pieces of the unformed mass or substance, and sometimes whole limbs already enlivened, which that horrid gulf insatiably swallowed, terrible to behold. The goose was also held a subaltern divinity or *deus minorum gentium*, before whose shrine was sacrificed that creature whose hourly food is human gore, and who is in so great renown abroad, for being the delight and favourite of the Egyptian Carcopithecus. Millions of these animals were cruelly slaughtered every day to appease the hunger of that consuming deity. The chief idol was also worshipped as the inventor of the yard and needle : whether as the god of seamen, or on account of certain other mystical attributes, has not been sufficiently cleared.

“The worshippers of this deity had also a system of their belief, which seemed to turn upon the following fundamentals. They held the universe to be a large suit of clothes, which invests everything : that the earth is invested by the air : the air is invested by the stars, and the stars are invested by the primum mobile. Look on this globe of earth. You will find it to be a very complete and fashionable dress. What is that which some call land, but a fine coat faced with green ? or the sea, but a waistcoat of water-tabby ? Proceed to the particular works of the creation you will find how curious journeyman Nature has been to train up the vegetable beaux : to observe how sparkish a periwig adorns the head of a beech, and what a fine

doublet of white satin is worn by the birch. To conclude from all, what is man himself but a micro-coat, or rather a complete suit of clothes with all its trimmings? As to his body there can be no dispute: but examine even the acquirements of his mind, you will find them all contribute in their order towards furnishing out an exact dress: to instance no more; is not religion a cloak; honesty a pair of shoes worn out in the dirt: self-love a surtout: vanity a shirt: and conscience a pair of breeches?

“These postulates being admitted, it will follow in due course of reasoning, that those beings, which the world calls improperly suits of clothes, are in reality the most refined of animals; or to proceed higher, that they are rational creatures or men. For, is it not manifest, that they live and move and talk and perform all other offices of human life? Are not beauty and wit and mien and breeding, their inseparable proprieties? In short we see nothing but them, hear nothing but them. Is it not they who walk the streets, fill up parliament—coffee—play-houses? It is true indeed that these animals, which are vulgarly called suits of clothes, or dresses, do, according to certain compositions, receive different appellations. If one of them be trimmed up with a gold chain, and a red gown, and a white rod, and a great horse, it is called a Lord Mayor: if certain ermines and furs be placed in a certain position, we style them a judge: and so our apt conjunction of lawn and black satin we entitle a Bishop.

“Others of these proposers, though agreeing in the

main system, were yet more refined upon certain branches of it : and held that man was an animal compounded of two dresses, the natural and celestial suit, which were the body and soul : that the soul was the outward and the body the inward clothing : that the latter was *ex traduce* : but the former of daily creation and circumfusion : this last they proved by scripture, because in them we live and move and have our being ; as likewise by philosophy, because they are all in all and all in every part. Besides, said they, separate these two, and you will find the body to be only a senseless, unsavoury carcase. By all which it is manifest, that the outward dress must needs be the soul. To this system of religion were tagged several subaltern doctrines which were entertained with great vogue, as particularly, the faculties of the mind were deduced by the learned in this manner : embroidery was sheer wit ; gold fringe was agreeable conversation ; gold lace was repartee : a huge long periwig was humour, and a coat full of powder was very good raillery : all which required abundance of finesse and delicateness to manage with advantage, as well as a strict observance after times and fashions."

The writer continues : "I have, with much pains and reading, collected out of ancient authors this short summary of a body of philosophy and divinity, which seems to have been composed by a vein and race of thinking very different from any other systems either ancient or modern. And it was not merely to entertain or satisfy the reader's curiosity, but rather

to give him light into several circumstances of the following story ; that knowing the state of dispositions and opinions in an age so remote, he may better comprehend those great events which were the issue of them. I advise therefore the courteous reader to peruse with a world of application, again and again whatever I have written upon this matter, and leaving these broken ends I carefully gather up the chief threads of my story and proceed."

This passage is perhaps one of the best instances of Swift's humour. It contains four-fold satire of the most scathing character, yet, withal, containing in its depth hidden laughter. Our own philosopher of clothes has not surpassed the satire on dress. The idol spoken of here is the tailor. And with all this is interwoven an attack on the philosophical systems of the day which is biting in its irony.

The institution of this religion in the fashionable world of necessity caused the brothers some qualms of conscience. To meet with favour at court they must adopt the prevailing modes of dress. The difficulty of one detail after another was overcome by some subterfuge or quibble owing to Peter's wonderful scholarship and erudition, without any actual violation of the father's will, until, "by long practice in this art, he succeeded in contriving a deed of conveyance of that house to himself and his heirs : upon which he took possession, turned the young squires out, and received his brothers in their stead."

From this time he adopted the title of my Lord Peter. With this were introduced Terra Australia,

Incognita and Purgatory, various remedies under which are satirized penance and absolution and the confessional, indulgences, holy water, etc. The narrative proceeds to relate in satiric form the institution of all the details of the Roman Catholic religion until Lord Peter became so violent that he turned his brothers bodily out of doors. The fate of Martin and Jack is then treated. They both long to restore their coats to their primitive plainness. Martin's work is prepared with exemplary care and patience so that he only discards the abuses, while Jack's undisciplined mind rejects both use and abuse alike. Moreover, he now began to receive nicknames of various sorts and to further the foundation of various sects such as the Æolists. This is followed by various absurdities, all of which point to Jack's lack of discrimination, until by a slight turn Peter and Jack are made to meet in many ways, until Peter and he both get into serious trouble. Martin has by this time distinctly separated from both parties. An effort is made to reconcile Peter and Martin but without success, until Martin is replaced by a fourth called by the author Lady Bess's institution, after which the struggle between Jack and Peter grows more and more severe.

Thus the story wanes to a close, nor is there an end to it, as of course there cannot be. The author's genius does not come out in the mere narration, it lies rather in the touches which are given to the main story. All the details which the writer wishes to attack are clearly described under a disguise complete in itself, though so obvious that the most inaccurate

observer cannot fail to recognize it. It is in this that the exuberance of Swift's imaginative faculty is at its best. Here there is a trace, just a touch, of that special feature of his genius which finds its greatest display in "Gulliver's Travels." There is, however, something lacking which it must have to reach the height of satirical genius. There is little, if any, satirical irony. It is blatant in its satire, and herein lies its greatest defect. But it is the defect perhaps due to youthfulness and lack of experience. Greater knowledge of life would have given the writer that refinement of satire which he so conspicuously lacks. To some extent this quality can never be his because, though his knowledge of human nature is fairly great, yet he lacks one thing, an understanding of the passions of human nature, hence his incompleteness. Perhaps this understanding is the faculty which is lacking to all but the highest satire. It is this faculty alone which to its possessor renders impossible satire of the Juvenilian type which is an inferior type. He who can look kindly on the foibles of human nature and try to cure by laughter, with, however, the serious note behind, is the greatest satirist. He is the great human because he possesses those faculties, the capacity for passion and emotion, which make human nature great and which at the same time give to it its capacity for weakness. But it is only this man who has the right or the ability to satirize the human race. Thus Swift cannot fully satirize the Church because he has no faculty for religious enthusiasm, for spiritual emotion. Hence some of his diatribes must



fall to the ground because they are based on a partial truth, and satire to be effective must be based on a knowledge of the whole truth, though for purposes of this kind of work only one side of it may be allowed to be in evidence. By neglecting the full aspect of the truth, moreover, he has shown his hand too clearly, and he stands out by this work as the exponent of Anglican principles at the expense of all others. In taking so comprehensive a subject as English religious bodies for the object of his satire, he should rather have allowed his own personal feelings to be placed on one side, and thus his work as being more complete would have been infinitely more effective. He has by no means yet reached the highest attainment of which his satiric faculty is capable. "What a genius I had when I wrote that book," he says of himself later. He should rather have said, "What potentiality for genius I had," and applied the other remark to "*Gulliver's Travels*": It is the indiscriminating attack of a youthful mind. It contains the exuberance of a first work. It is essentially the work of a young writer whose genius bubbles forth absolutely without restraint.

This feature is also found in that part of the work which deals with literary criticism; but here it is slightly toned down. Perhaps this passage is a striking instance:—

"I confess to have, for a long time, borne a part in this general error: from which I should never have acquitted myself, but through the assistance of our noble moderns! whose most edifying volumes

I turn indefatigably over night and day for the improvement of my mind, and the good of my country. These have, with unwearied pains, made many useful searches into the weak side of the ancients, and given us a comprehensive list of them. Besides they have proved beyond contradiction that the very finest things delivered of old, have been long since invented and brought to light by much later pens: and that the noblest discoveries these ancients ever made, of art or nature, have all been produced by the transcending genius of the present age, which clearly shews how little merit those ancients can justly pretend to, and takes off that blind admiration paid them by men in a corner, who have the unhappiness of conversing too little with present things."

The following passage perhaps is an instance of the youthful genius who does not understand the refinement of satire: "For all human actions seem to be divided, like Themistocles and his company; one man can fiddle, and another can make a small town a great city; and he that cannot do either one or the other deserves to be kicked out of the creation."

Much of the work is occupied with criticisms on the Moderns in favour of the Ancients as the two learned parties were then called. An attack lately made on Homer is satirized in the following passage among others:—

"But besides these omissions in Homer already mentioned, the curious reader will also observe

several defects in that author's writings, for which he is not altogether so accountable. For whereas every touch of knowledge has received such wonderful acquirements since his age, especially within these last three years, or thereabouts, it is almost impossible he could be so very perfect in modern discoveries as his advocates pretend. We freely acknowledge him to be the inventor of the compass, of gunpowder, and the circulation of the blood: but I challenge any of his admirers to shew me, in all his writings, a complete account of the spleen. Does he not also leave us wholly to seek in the art of political wagering? What can be more defective and unsatisfactory than his long dissertation upon tea? and as to his method of salivation without mercury so much celebrated of late, it is to my own knowledge and experience a thing very little to be relied on."

The modern habit of writing long prefaces to books is satirized to the following effect: "On the strength of which title, I do utterly disapprove and declare against that pernicious custom, of making the preface a bill of fare to the book. For I have always looked upon it as a high point of indiscretion in monster-mongers, and other retailers of strange sights, to hang out a fair large picture over the door, drawn after the life, with a most eloquent description underneath. This hath saved me many a threepence: for my curiosity was fully satisfied, and I never offered to go in, though often invited by the urging and attending orator, with his last moving and standing

piece of rhetoric, 'Sir, upon my word, we are just going to begin.' Such is exactly the fate, at this time, of Prefaces, Epistles, Advertisements, Introductions, Prolegomenas, Apparatuses, To the Readers! This expedient was admirable at first: our great Dryden has long carried it as far as it would go, and with incredible success. He has often said to me in confidence that the world would never have suspected him to be a poet, if he had not assured them so frequently in his prefaces, that it was impossible they could either doubt or forget it. Perhaps it may be so."

There is a satirical passage on the modern lack of scholarship. "The whole course of things being thus entirely changed between us and the ancients, and the moderns wisely sensible of it, we of this age have discovered a shorter and more prudent method, to become scholars and wits, without the fatigue of reading or of thinking. The most accomplished way of reading books at present is twofold; either, first, to serve them as some men do lords, learn their titles exactly, and then brag of their acquaintance. Or, secondly, which is indeed the choicer, the profounder and politer method, to get a thorough insight into the index, by which the whole book is governed and turned, like fishes by the tail.

"By these methods, in a few weeks, there starts up many a writer, capable of managing the profoundest and most universal subjects. For, what though his head be empty, provided his commonplace book be full, and if you will bate him but the

circumstances of method and style and grammar, and invention : allow him but the common privileges of transcribing from others, and digressing from himself, as often as he shall see occasion : he will desire no more ingredients towards fitting up a treatise, that he shall make a very comely figure on a bookseller's shelf ; there to be preserved neat and clean for a long eternity, adorned with the heraldry of its title inscribed on a label ; never to be thumbed or greased by students, nor bound to everlasting chains of darkness in a library : but, when the fulness of time is come, shall happily undergo the trial of purgatory, in order to ascend the sky."

The development of the tale, which includes the story of Jack's madness, here leads to a digression on Madness which might be thought unnecessary to the continuation of the work.

The "Battle of the Books" strikes the note of youth more apparently than the "Tale of a Tub;" the satire is more obvious and therefore less interesting. It is the least important of the three, both from its intrinsic literary value and also from the light which it throws on Swift's genius. Its chief value is a historical one as illustrating to some slight extent the controversy between the Ancients and the Moderns. Its merit lies also in individual passages which would have been no discredit to Swift even at the height of his genius. He describes Bentley thus : "The guardian of the regal library, a person of great valour, but chiefly revered for his humanity, had been a fierce champion for the Moderns : and, in an engagement

upon Parnassus, had vowed, with his own hands, to knock down the Ancient chiefs, who guarded a small pass on the superior rock ; but endeavouring to climb up, was cruelly obstructed by his own unhappy weight, and tendency towards his centre, a quality to which those of the Modern party are extremely subject : for, being lightheaded, they have, in speculation, a wonderful agility, and conceive nothing too high for them to mount ; but, in reducing to practice, discover a mighty pressure about their heels."

The picture of Criticism is a fine piece of work recalling the vividness and realism of Spenser's description : " Meanwhile Momus, fearing the worst, and calling to mind an ancient prophecy, which bore no very good face to his children the Moderns, sent his flight to the region of a malignant deity, called Criticism. She dwelt on the top of a snowy mountain in Nova Zembla : there Momus found her extended in her den, upon the spoils of numberless volumes, half-devoured. At her right hand sat Ignorance, her father and husband, blind with age : at her left Pride, her mother, dressing her up on the scraps of paper herself had torn. There was Opinion her sister, light of foot, hoodwinked and headstrong, yet giddy and perpetually turning. About her played her children, Noise and Impudence, Dullness and Vanity, Positiveness, Pedantry and Ill-manners. The goddess herself had claws like a cat : her head, and ears, and voice, resembled those of an ass : her teeth fallen out before, her eyes turned inward, as if she looked only

upon herself: her diet was the overflowing of her own gall, etc."

Criticism's own account of herself is also worthy of quotation. "'Tis I," she said, "who give wisdom to infants and idiots: by me, children grow wiser than their parents; by me, beaux become politicians, and schoolboys judges of philosophy: by me, sophisters debate, and conclude upon the depths of knowledge: and coffee-house wits, instinct by me, can correct an author's style, and display his minutest errors, without understanding a syllable of his matter or language. By me, striplings spend their judgment as they do their estate, before it comes into their hands. 'Tis I who have deposed wit and knowledge from their empire over poetry, and advanced myself in their stead."

Perhaps the description of the encounter between Virgil and Dryden wins the laurel for humour and contains more of the element of irony than is to be found throughout the rest of the work. "On the left wing of the horse Virgil appeared, in shining armour, completely fitted to his body: he was mounted on a dapple-grey steed, the slowness of whose pace was an effect of the highest mettle and vigour. He cast his eye on the adverse wing, with a desire to find an object worthy of his valour, when, behold, upon a sorrel gelding of a monstrous size appeared a foe, issuing from among the thickest of the enemy's squadrons: but his speed was less than his noise; for his horse, old and lean, spent the dregs of his strength in a high trot, which, though it made slow

advances, yet caused a loud clashing of his armour, terrible to hear. The two cavaliers had now approached within the throw of a lance, when the stranger desired a parley, and lifting up the vizard of his helmet, a face hardly appeared from within, which, after a pause was known for that of the renowned Dryden. The brave Ancient suddenly started, as one possessed with surprise and disappointment together: for the helmet was nine times too large for the head, which appeared situate in the hinder part, even like the lady on a lobster, or like a mouse under a canopy of state, or like a shrivelled beau within the penthouse of a modern periwig: and the voice was suited to the visage, sounding weak and remote. Dryden, in a long harangue, soothed up the good Ancient, called him father, and, by a large deduction of genealogies made it plainly appear that they were nearly related. Then he humbly proposed an exchange of armour, as a lasting mark of hospitality between them. Virgil consented (for the goddess Diffidence came unseen, and cast a mist before his eyes) though his was of gold, and cost a hundred beeves, the other's but of rusty iron. However, this glittering armour became the Modern yet worse than his own. Then they agreed to exchange horses: but, when it came to the trial, Dryden was afraid, and utterly unable to mount."

Another characteristic of this work which affords some amusement and is too, perhaps, an additional proof of its place in Swift's early work, is its



semi-classical character. The heroic nature of the work, intended to be to some extent an imitation of the classical epic, abounds in similes of the Homeric type; some are, indeed, a close imitation of the Homeric simile. "Fain would he have been revenged on both; but both now fled different ways; and as a woman in a little house that gets a painful livelihood by spinning; if chance her geese be scattered o'er the common, she courses round the plain from side to side, compelling here and there the stragglers to the flock: they cackle loud, and flutter o'er the champaign. So Boyle pursued, so fled this pair of friends."

Here, as in the Homeric simile, the point of similarity is absolutely single, almost momentary, and, as it often seems, of secondary importance. The phraseology and the word-arrangement are also epic in character. The work represents in exaggerated pictures the contest between the Books in St. James' Library, embodying the struggle between the Ancients and Moderns, and clever hits are achieved at individuals.

"He (Wotton) in the meantime, had wandered long in search of some enterprise, till at length he arrived at a small rivulet, that issued from a fountain hard by, called in the language of mortal men, Helicon. Here he stopped, and, parched with thirst, resolved to allay it in this limpid stream. Thrice with profane hands he essayed to raise the water to his lips, and thrice it slipped all through his fingers. Then he stooped prone on his breast, but,

ere his mouth had kissed the liquid crystal, Apollo came, and in the channel held his shield betwixt the Modern and the fountain, so that he drew up nothing but mud. For, although no fountain on earth can compare with the clearness of Helicon, yet there lies at bottom a thick sediment of slime and mud, for so Apollo begged of Jupiter, as a punishment to those who durst attempt to taste it with unhallowed lips, and for a lesson to all not to draw too deep or far from the spring."

The existence of the episode of the bee and the spider is difficult to understand. It is impossible to suppose that Swift merely meant to draw, by its means, a likeness between the dispute of the Ancients and Moderns and the quarrel of the bee and the spider. Such a conclusion would belie the writer's sense of humour. It appears to be rather a mirror in which the chief disputants in the story see themselves reflected, as there is obviously a parallel to be drawn between the two disputes. Again by the use of it he emphasizes the frivolity and emptiness of the famous quarrel by making the disputants turn aside from, and momentarily forget their serious quarrel, to listen to the struggle going on in beast land, only to realize, when the quarrel is over, that they are themselves but repeating the self-same theme.

The whole of Swift's other work, however, sinks into insignificance before his greatest creation, "Gulliver's Travels." In this monument is manifested, perhaps, every element of the literary genius of this

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man-mountain of English Literature. It is million-eyed, hundred-headed hydra product of great man's power. It is the greatest human something that has ever been written.

That ogle-eyed, pot-bellied sphinx, Human Nature, enthroned on a pedestal whose roots are eaten away by the worm Imagination, whose extremities are human institutions, the reflections of man's cunning and the abuse of his power, shrieks under the scalpel of the operator, who pays no heed to the anti-vivisectionists' appeal for anæsthetics, now for the victims, now for the audience. Now it is placed under a magnifying-glass until it fills the whole of the vision, and its defects and sores are too loathsome for the eye to look on unshielded. Now it is minimized until it becomes a mere insect walking on the glass, too insignificant to be considered a motive force in the Universe, where it is but an atom in the mighty fabrication of an Idea too enormous to be grasped. It is stripped of every cloak which it wears, and every instinct, every emotion is held up, writhing, before the grinning gaze of an audience ready to rejoice in the pain of brother man, but, at the same time, too thick-skinned to feel that the vulture is gnawing even at his own vitals. Nor is it only man's temperament and character which are attacked. His little toys and playthings, his systems of Government, his systems of acquiring knowledge, his scientific systems, all meet with the same unsparing ridicule. Now he masquerades as a gigantic booby before a host of

marionettes, of wooden dolls whose very success in systems satirizes the human being who in the absence of his moral eyesight piles one false system on another in the hope of making a perfect one. It is the task of an insane Heracles to sweep out the Augean stable with a club, and this is the occupation in which man is represented, while a host of almost invisible imps dances on and about the misshapen Caliban, who is tyrannized over by a vindictive Prospero in the shape of Providence. Man's feeble efforts are annulled by the darts of ninepins, who, in their wooden consciousness, know that he is best assailable as a physical creation.

In this work Swift has employed with the utmost skill those weapons which are pre-eminently his own, the enlargement of the human stage by imagination, and the revelation of the human character by means of satire. Herein lies the secret of the almost unparalleled popularity of "Gulliver's Travels." It contains a twofold appeal, to children and to men. This land of wonders with its eccentric names and titles, with the perpetual contrast of big and little, and its consequent absurdity; with the political "big game" brought within the region of domestic life, appeals to the child's mind which is always ready to pass the threshold of Topsy Turveydom. The grown-up mind delights in the more ludicrous and yet more sinister side of the picture, for Swift has dared to write in black and white what every human being knows and believes in his inmost consciousness to be the truth of that part of mankind which he does

not describe as the Ego. It is the most typically characteristic of all Swift's work. It contains complete in itself all the characteristics which render his other works remarkable. It is a monument alike to the greatest as to the most unfortunate side of his genius. We see in this Swift's almost complete knowledge of human nature, and we see the intensity of this knowledge carry him further and further along the path on which he has set out, until, in this, as in all his other work, he must carry his main idea to its logical conclusion, and his recognition of the defects in human nature leads him to depict fallen human nature, fallen indeed beyond all human possibilities, a description which culminates in the loathsome and horrible picture of the Yahoos. The course of the writer's thought is not a straight one. It begins with the foibles of human nature as affecting the individual and the same foibles in their effect on the whole human race; thus far the tone is lightly humorous, man's little follies are treated with gentleness and light ridicule. In the third book, however, man's little foibles have become follies of the most serious description, based on error. In the fourth book man and error are identical terms, and the error is gross and unspeakable.

The style and mode of description are those of a garrulous and reminiscent sea-captain, who tells the story in a way simple enough to disarm suspicion and prevent expectation of any inner or remoter meaning. Hence comes the direct appeal to the

child's mind. Whether intentionally or not, as representing the sea-captain's narrative, the book is loosely strung together, there is no main plot, and the satire is so essentially different in method in the four books that this alone forms an insufficient connection.

The voyage to Lilliput represents Swift in contact with human nature, as depicted in the character of the Lilliputians. We are tempted to believe that the whole book is vaguely autobiographical. It is, we think, meant by the writer to be considered, not as an intensely serious satire, but rather as a loose dissertation. In it he and human nature are brought into strong contrast with each other, and human nature is more exactly represented in the Lilliputians whose court and society, we are tempted to think, illustrates English court and society. Yet, on the other hand, Lilliput may be taken to mean Ireland and Blefuscu Scotland, for the date of the supposed discovery of Lilliput (1699) coincides with that of Swift's first introduction to Ireland as a place of residence, namely, his acceptance of the living of Laracor. The topographical situation of the two countries supports this view, while it entirely contradicts the theory generally held that Lilliput and Blefuscu represent England and France respectively. On the other hand, there are allusions to the custom of the young Lilliputians and Blefuscans travelling in each other's countries for the sake of completing their education, and in this case Ireland and Scotland could not be meant.

That Swift was not, or pretended not to be, of a scientific turn of mind, we have evidence in the third book, where science is ridiculed under the cloak of the people of Laputa, and here, perhaps is another instance of this kind. The meaning of the voyage to Lilliput must therefore be taken as vague from the beginning, and therefore, perhaps, it is legitimate to consider it as the story of Swift and his political relationships. If it is to be taken simply as a vague representation of human nature, then the question arises, Why have we the book on Brobdingnag at all? for this again is merely a representation of human nature under another aspect, and it would be an insult to Swift's intellect to suppose such a thing. Therefore perhaps we may consider the first book as an apologia in which satire on humanity enters incidentally, arising from particular instances. The second book arises from the first, and in it the particular instances, as, for example, the defects of institutions, are used as illustrations of human nature. The writer in the third book has ceased to look kindly on the nature of man, and is becoming savagely ironical in his attack on its defects, while in the fourth book he depicts a nature wholly diseased and wholly corrupt. But, the question arises in our minds, is it human nature at all?

The introductory episode in Gulliver's dealings with the Lilliputians, in which the Giant lies quietly on the ground for the little people to pierce him with their arrows, reminds us of Swift's treatment of those in power in his day, and his final

submission still further endorses this. Gulliver, the man-mountain, is taken as a prisoner to the court of Lilliput and is there treated with more or less honour by the king of the pigmies. It is in the contrast between the two whose function and characteristic are of course similar, though on a different scale, that the humour lies, through its very incongruity. There is much quiet humour introduced at the expense of the court customs and functions. "The Emperor had a mind one day to entertain me with several of the country shews wherein they exceed all natives I have known, both for dexterity and magnificence. I was diverted with none so much as that of the rope-dancers, performed upon a slender white thread, extended about two feet and twelve inches from the ground. Upon which I shall desire liberty, with the reader's patience, to enlarge a little.

"This diversion is only practised by those persons who are candidates for great employments and high favour at court. They are trained in this art from their youth, and are not always of noble birth, or liberal education. When a great office is vacant, either by death or disgrace (which often happens), five or six of these candidates petition the Emperor to entertain his Majesty and the court with a dance on the rope, and whoever jumps the highest without falling, succeeds in the office. Very often the chief ministers themselves are commanded to shew their skill, and to convince the Emperor that they have not lost their faculty. Flimnap, the Treasurer, is allowed



to cut a caper on the straight rope, at least an inch higher than any other cord in the whole empire. I have seen him do the summerset several times together upon a trencher fixed on the rope, which is no thicker than a common pack-thread in England. My friend Reldresal, principal secretary for private affairs, is, in my opinion, if I am not partial, the second after the Treasurer; the rest of the great officers were much upon a par.

“These diversions are often attended with fatal accidents, whereof great numbers are on record. I myself have seen two or three candidates break a limb. But the danger is much greater when the ministers themselves are commanded to shew their dexterity for, by contending to excel themselves and their fellows, they claim so far, that there is hardly one of them who hath not received a fall, and some of them two or three. I was assured that a year or two before my arrival Flimnap would have infallibly broke his neck, if one of the King’s cushions, that accidentally lay on the ground, had not weakened the force of his fall.

“There is likewise another diversion, which is only shewn before the Emperor and Empress, and first minister, upon particular occasions. The Emperor lays on the table three fine silken threads of six inches long. One is blue, the other red, and the third green. These threads are proposed as prizes for those persons whom the Emperor hath a mind to distinguish by a peculiar mark of his favour. The ceremony is performed in his Majesty’s great chamber

of state, where the candidates are to undergo a trial of dexterity very different from the former, and such as I have not observed the least resemblance of in any other country of the old or the new world. The Emperor holds a stick in his hands, both ends parallel to the horizon, while the candidates advancing one by one, sometimes leap over the stick, sometimes creep under it backwards and forwards several times, according as the stick is advanced or depressed. Sometimes the Emperor holds one end of the stick, and his first minister the other: sometimes the minister has it entirely to himself. Whoever performs his part with most agility, and holds out the longest in leaping and creeping, is rewarded with the blue-coloured silk: the red is given to the next, and the green to the third, which they all wear just twice round about the middle: and you see few great persons about this Court who are not adorned with one of these girdles."

Allusions are made throughout the book to the events which were causing more or less of an upheaval throughout the country. The parties of Whig and Tory respectively are satirized under the names *Tramecksam* and *Slamecksam* "from the high and low heels on their shoes, by which they distinguish themselves." "It is alleged indeed that the high heels are most agreeable to our ancient constitution: but, however this be, his Majesty hath determined to make use of only low heels in the administration of the Government, and all offices in the gift of the Crown, as you cannot but observe: and particularly, that his

Majesty's Imperial heels are lower at least by a drurr than any of his court : (drurr is a measure about the fourteenth part of an inch). The animosities between these two parties run so high, that they will neither eat nor drink, nor talk with each other."

The disputes between Roman Catholics and Protestants is discussed under the following imagery : "Which two mighty powers (see Lilliput and Blefuscu) have, as I was going to tell you, been engaged in a most obstinate war for six and thirty moons past. It began upon the following occasion. It is allowed on all hands, that the primitive way of breaking eggs before we eat them, was upon the larger end : but his present Majesty's grandfather, while he was a boy, going to eat an egg, and breaking it according to the ancient practice, happened to cut one of his fingers, whereupon the Emperor his father published an edict, commanding all his subjects, upon great penalties, to break the smaller end of their eggs. The people so highly resented this law that our histories tell us there have been six rebellions raised on that account, wherein one Emperor lost his life, and another his crown. These civil commotions were constantly fomented by the monarchs of Blefuscu : and when they were quelled, the exiles always fled for refuge to that empire. It is computed that eleven thousand persons have at several times, suffered death, rather than submit to break their eggs at the smaller end. Many hundred large volumes have been published upon this controversy, but the books of the Big Endians have been long forbidden, and the whole party, rendered

incapable by law of holding employments. During the course of these troubles, the Emperor of Blefuscu did frequently expostulate by their ambassadors, accusing us of making a schism in religion, by offending against a fundamental doctrine of our great prophet Lustrog in the fifty-fourth chapter of the Blundecral (which is their Alcoran). This, however, is thought to be a mere strain upon the text: for the words are these: 'That all true believers break their eggs at the convenient end': and which is the convenient end, seems, in my humble opinion, to be left to every one's own conscience, or at least in the power of the chief magistrate to determine. Now the Big Endian exiles have found so much credit in the Emperor of Blefuscu's court, and so much private assistance and encouragement from their party here at home, that a bloody war has been carried on between the two empires for six and thirty moons with various success; during which time we have lost forty capital ships, and a much greater number of smaller vessels, together with thirty thousand of our best seamen and soldiers; and the damage received by the enemy is reckoned to be somewhat greater than ours. However, they have now equipped a numerous fleet, and are just preparing to make a descent upon us." The other special points of attack in the first book are the education of children and the system of punishment commercial and civil, and these are satirized by means of description of systems diametrically opposed to those of England, or indeed, any country.

The second book, "A Voyage to Brobdingnag,"

enters into a closer satirical description of human nature *per se*. It contains, indeed, a magnificent account in detail of a supposed political system in England, and the satire occurs in the fact that it is entirely the opposite of the English system. But a definite key is provided in the King's answer to Swift, which is a denial of even that small amount of good which really exists.

Women are here attacked with some virulence, and perhaps it would be truer to say that their defects are ridiculed, for Swift is pre-eminently the upholder of the privileges of women, jealous of their honour, and keenly sensitive of any slight which is put upon them. The whole book is, however, general in its character, and ends, as does the first book, with an attack upon the ingratitude of princes.

The third book attacks pseudo-science, and the pursuit of wealth by every means possible, which was pre-eminently a feature of this time, as of our own generation. It is a melancholy attack on the tendency in human nature to pursue a myth in the semblance of truth. It satirizes first false systems of science, but it is an attack in a wider sense on the pursuit of any one object at the expense of all others, in other words on the lack of proportion which characterizes the human mind and especially the feminine mind. It is essentially a sad piece of writing, rendered more so by the autobiographical touch at the end where Swift, in his account of the Struldbrugs, gives vent to his own dread of old age with that accompanying loss of faculties which

he was sure would add to his misery towards the end of his life. It is a difficult book to read because of its horrible detail, and serves to pave the way for the morbidity of the "Voyage to the Houyhnhnms."

A question must arise here as to whether Swift really intended the Yahoos to represent human nature at all, and an elaborate dissertation has been written on the subject to prove that, by altering the physical characteristics of this race, their likeness to humanity has been mutilated, and that therefore they are not meant by the writer to be a satire on his own species. Nor does he wish to so materially degrade human nature by drawing such a strong contrast between the race of man and beast to the great disadvantage of humanity. Perhaps this theory, in its attempt to palliate the wrath of human kind, is overdrawn. We are tempted to believe that Swift meant what he said, and that he would prefer not to have any of the bitterness alleviated. It is perhaps to be taken as the last savage protest of a mind bitterly enraged against those human beings with whom he had come closely in contact, those men and women who had caused the ruin of all his projects. A life given up to altruism means bitter disappointment for the professor of this form of philanthropy, and the philosophical endurance of one bitter failure after another, of one act of ingratitude after another, demands a height of spiritual uplifting of the character greater than Swift possessed. He was jealous, too, for the honour of his race, and by that strange distortion of temperament, which made

him earn the title of "inverted hypocrite" by caring nothing for his own reputation, he has carried the process into his treatment of human nature. His life may be taken as a prototype of this, his greatest work. At the close of his life, his hand is against every man, he thinks that every man's hand is against him, and puts into words that belief, to him a terrible truth, which has been borne in upon him of sad necessity. His spirit is torn asunder by its very bitterness, his heart, once overflowing with love of mankind, now forced to drink of its own rejected fount, recoils upon itself, and the greatest altruist known to history earns the title of misanthropist.

## CHAPTER VII

### SWIFT IN IRELAND

THE land which he hated re-echoed to Swift's first cry. The land which he hated resounded with his last words. But another sound arose as his last cry of pain died away ; it was the voice of a people, a cry of grief coming from the heart of those who mourned a benefactor, whose disinterested care for his *protégés* had given them a new dignity, and a sense of their claim in the universe, which they had perhaps never before possessed. No one, be he king or patriot, has ever before claimed a whole nation as his family. Swift, without consciously asserting a right, won Ireland body and soul, to be his, until all banded together, in one united front, ready to defend him against every danger. No demagogue has known a more enthusiastic following. Swift achieved his triumph without any of the fleeting or specious qualities of the man in the street, it was permanent and entire. Nor have its traces died away. No one can visit the country of Swift's enforced adoption without being strongly moved by the devotion to the patriot. He is not represented by statues. He has a more



permanent throne in the hearts of the people. Even now, after the lapse of nearly two centuries, their eyes brighten at the mention of the Dean. The children run, to point out to you his birthplace. He is one of the national heroes, and to people of the Celtic temperament, a national hero is a being to be loved and revered for ever. Swift's story in its setting of Stella's cottage at Trim, and Vanessa's bower at Cellbridge, appeals to the romance inherent in an Irishman's nature. A genuine interest in Swift wins the allegiance of the Irish heart. Reverence for him opens the flood-gates of information, legendary or authentic.

No. 7, Hoey's Court, then a picturesque old house, the residence of Godwin Swift, the lawyer, was Swift's birthplace. It is now pulled down, and a heap of stones and débris covers the site. It is situated not far from St. Patrick's Cathedral in the old part of Dublin, and the narrow squalid court is graced by a bust of the Dean, a hopelessly bad representation, much defaced. Wilde thus describes the place: "Adjoining a portion of one of the ancient city walls—one of the few vestiges of them now remaining, and running between Castle Street and the junction of Great and Little Ship Street, is a narrow passage now called the Castle Steps, but in former days Cole's Alley. The eastern side is formed by the Castle wall: and about the end of the last century, a number of small open shops or stalls, chiefly occupied by buckle-makers or cheap sellers, framed its western side. There were then no

steps as at present, but a very steep slippery descent, down which the apprentice boys from Skinner's Row and the adjoining street occupied by artisans used to run their comrades on first joining the craft, as a sort of initiatory "jobbing." Towards the lower end of this descent, on the western side, another alley led up a few steps into a small square court, in the mouldering grandeur of the house of which we still recognize the remains of a locality once fashionable and opulent. Here on our right is the house occupied by Surgeon-General Buxton; that beyond it was the residence of Lord Chancellor Bowes, and a little farther on, upon the right, stands the celebrated Eades Coffee House, where the wits and statesmen of the day drank their claret and canary. Upon the opposite side, where the court narrows into the lane that leads into St. Werburgh Street, is the house, No. 7, where Jonathan Swift was born, the 30th November, 1667. A handsome doorcase a few years ago ornamented the front of the house, but some antiquary, it is said, carried it away; the mark is still visible."

Swift began life in opulent surroundings, for his uncle Godwin was then in possession of a large fortune. Kilkenny Grammar School and Trinity College were the scenes of the next two periods of his life in Ireland. In the story of his College life he has been so much confounded with his cousin Thomas Swift, that it is impossible to disentangle the web. One fact is probably true, that it was in

Swift's rambles through the streets of Dublin in his College days that he first began to meet with and learn to know the poor and, in some cases, lower classes. It was his habit a few years later to associate with those of humble station. In his journeys from Moor Park to his mother's house at Leicester he used to spend the night at cheap lodging houses, in order to make friends with those poorer than himself, taking the very necessary precaution of paying sixpence extra for clean sheets. The result of this was his intimate knowledge of their characters, and his association with the servants and grooms at various houses where he stayed, no doubt taught him to understand the workings of the menial mind. The time of his residence at Laracor is prolific with stories and anecdotes, for most of which we have to thank Sheridan. No doubt he did not find the living at Laracor inspiriting. It was a tiny hamlet of which the Church-going population numbered fourteen. Swift's temper had been so soured by the repeated disappointments he had met with, that, although the two livings of Laracor and Rathbeggin in the diocese of Meath, were much inferior in value to what he had been promised, he received them with satisfaction, however unwilling he might be to own it, being the first secure though trifling provision he had been able to obtain. Swift determined to perform his journey to Laracor on foot, a mode of travelling very customary with him. It was the first tour he had ever made in Ireland, a country of which he had formed the most contemptible opinion, and

not a very good one of the inhabitants. He accordingly prepared himself as if he had to penetrate into the country of the Houyhnhnms: but with a determination to be a little better provided than his own Gulliver. A decent suit of black clothes, with strong worsted stockings, of which he carried a second pair and a shirt in his pocket, a large grey surtout, a round slouched hat, with a pole considerably longer than himself, which he had probably procured from some country haymaker, formed the whole travelling accoutrements of the afterwards celebrated Dean of St. Patrick's.

The three towns of Navan, Kells, and Trim, which lay in Swift's route on his first journey to Laracor, seem to have deeply arrested his attention, for he has been frequently heard to speak of the beautiful situation of the first, the antiquity of the second, and the time-shaken towers of the third. There were three inns in Navan, each of which claim to this day the honour of having entertained Dr. Swift! It is probable that he dined at one of them, for it is certain that he slept at Kells in the house of Jonathan Belcher, a Leicestershire man, who had built the inn in that town on the English model, which still exists, and, in point of capaciousness and convenience, would not disgrace the first road in England. The host, whether struck by the commanding sternness of Swift's appearance, or from national civility, showed him into the best room and waited himself at table. The attention of Belcher seems so far to have won upon Swift as to have

produced some conversation. "You're an Englishman, sir?" said Swift. "Yes, sir." "What is your name?" "Jonathan Belcher, sir." "An Englishman and Jonathan too, in the town of Kells—who would have thought it! What brought you to this country?" "I came with Sir Thomas Taylor, sir; and I believe I could reckon fifty Jonathans in my family." "Then you are a man of family?" "Yes, sir, I have four sons and three daughters by one mother, a good woman of true Irish mould." "Have you been long out of your native country?" "Thirty years, sir." "Do you ever expect to visit it again?" "Never." "Can you say that without a sigh?" "I can, sir; my family is my country!" "Why, sir, you are a better philosopher than those who have written volumes on the subject: then you are reconciled to your fate?" "I ought to be so; I am very happy, and I like the people, and, though I was not born in Ireland, I'll die in it, and that's the same thing." Swift paused in deep thought for nearly a minute, and then with much energy repeated the first line of the preamble of the noted Irish Statute—" *Ipsis Hibernis Hiberniores!* "

In spite of the risk of this Life of Swift becoming too anecdotal in character, one more story must find place here. "On the evening of the fourth day of his pedestrian journey, Swift reached Laracor. The curate of the parish was smoking his pipe at the door, when Swift advancing with a hasty step, and without the least hesitation, asked him his name. The good old pastor was so struck with the appearance of

Swift, and the abruptness of the question, that he could scarcely articulate 'Jones.' 'Well, then, I am your master!' exclaimed Swift. When the curate recovered a little from his surprise, he bowed in silence, not the bow of servility, but of respect. He led Swift into the best room in his humble cottage, and introduced him to his wife in these words. . . . 'Mary, my dear, this is the new vicar our new master.' Swift did not attempt to qualify the harshness of the expression, though it was easy to perceive the effect it had on Mrs. Jones, and, as if it were to heighten the effect, pulled a shirt out of his pocket, and handed it to the lady, saying, as he stretched out his hand, 'Madam, if you are not too proud, lay that shirt in your drawer, if you have one.' Mrs. Jones obeyed in silence, but trembled so violently, that it is probable the next minute she could not tell where it was laid. Swift then threw himself into an armchair, and after casting his eyes in a supercilious manner round the room, neither the curate nor his wife daring to speak, condescended to ask if they had anything to eat. This was joyful news to Mrs. Jones, who hoped that her clean diaper cloth, new plates, and a few knives and forks which had not for a long time been called into use, would relax the severity of the vicar's brow. Mr. Jones' goodness of heart readily suggested to him that Swift's ill-humour arose from fatigue, or what was still more natural, hunger: but he could not, by any conjecture, get rid of his first looks, and the sound of his words still vibrated on his ear. Swift praised the table-cloth, the order in which the

plates were arranged, etc., which in an instant wiped off all the ill impressions Mrs. Jones had entertained. He now saw that he had got the mastery, and was determined to keep it.

“Swift the next morning inquired the character of Mr. Jones from the parish clerk, who set him forth as the best of men, and the first of scholars. He was certainly well versed in the Greek and Roman classics, and very luckily had committed most of them to memory in his youth, for he had only one or two in his library, which consisted of a large Bible, Seneca’s works in Latin, Sir Walter Raleigh’s ‘History of the World,’ the first edition of Chaucer, and an Almanac almost as old as himself. Mrs. Jones likewise came in for her share of praise, particularly for affability to inferiors. She was descended from one of the oldest families in the country; nay, it was even said that there was a small sprig of nobility in the maternal line.”

No doubt Mr. and Mrs. Jones were the shining lights of the village of Laracor, and had Swift been dependent on them for society he would have been in a desperate plight. For the greater part of his residence there, however, Stella was living at Trim, three miles away, and proved a solace to him in the dreariness of his work. He found in his parish one thoroughly congenial soul, Roger Cox, the clerk. We are told that “Roger was originally a hatter in the town of Cavan, but, being of a lively, jovial temper, and fonder of setting the fireside of a village alehouse in a roar over a tankard of ale, or a bowl of

whiskey, with his flashes of merriment and gibes of humour, than pursuing the dull routine of business to which fate had fixed him, wisely forsook it for the honourable function of a parish clerk, which he considered as an office appertaining in some wise to ecclesiastical dignity, since by wearing a band, no small part of the ornament of our clergy, he thought he might not unworthily be deemed, as it were, 'a shred of the linen vestment of Aaron.' Nor was Roger one of those worthy parish clerks who could be accused of merely humming the psalms through the nostril as a sack-butt, but much oftener instructed and amused his fellow parishioners with the amorous ditties of the 'waiting-maid's lamentation,' or one of those national songs which awake the remembrance of glorious deeds, and make each man burn with the enthusiasm of the conquering hero. With this jocund companion, Swift relieved the tediousness of his lonesome retirement: nor did the easy freedom which he indulged with Roger ever lead this humble friend beyond the strict bounds of decorum and respect. His dress was not the least extraordinary feature of his appearance. He constantly wore a full-trimmed scarlet waistcoat of most uncommon dimensions, a light grey coat, which altogether gave him an air of singularity and whim as remarkable as his character. The scarlet waistcoat soon caught Swift's eye: Roger bowed and observed that 'he wore scarlet because he belonged to the Church militant.' Roger is the reputed author of many wise sayings. Swift was impatient to see the church. It was in a most





OLD PARISH CHURCH OF LARACOR  
FROM AN ENGRAVING



STELLA'S COTTAGE, LARACOR



KNIGHTSBROOK RIVER, LARACOR  
SHOWING SOME OF SWIFT'S WILLOWS, PLANTED BY HIMSELF



miserable plight indeed. 'What,' exclaimed Swift in a tone of the utmost indignation, 'could your last vicar—why he must have been a wretch indeed, to permit the house of God to sink in ruins under his eye.' 'Why,' said Roger, 'please your reverence, our last vicar lived *by* the Church, but he did not live *in* it: and we, the poor sheep of such a shepherd, thought it was the finest pinfold in the world.'" The beauty and magnificent proportions of the newly built Catholic church of Trim as contrasted with the small and unpretentious church at Laracor may perhaps be explained to some extent by this story.

Such were Swift's associates in the village where he rightly considered himself buried alive. Yet he became very fond of his willows at Laracor. The mental picture of them was often a great pleasure to him when in the middle of the political ferment. This was his home for twelve years. No wonder, then, that he conceived some affection for it, or that he learnt to know the character of the people among whom he lived. It is difficult to understand why he had so little affection for them. Probably he had a real liking for them, though once more he wished to maintain the character of inverted hypocrite, and to conceal his natural kindliness under a rough exterior. It is difficult to believe that he could expend all his energies and best efforts on the Irish nation as he did in the matter of Wood's Halfpence, without any basis of affection for his actions. The village of Laracor, lying in the middle of beautiful Irish pasture, forms a background for Swift's political life. Swift's

willows still border the banks of the stream, the well beside which he used to sit is still pointed out. Everything breathes the spirit of the man who, in the middle of bitter political struggle, could turn in imagination to the green fields and budding hedges among which walked the woman on whom all his highest thoughts centred. His mind would turn to the walk beneath the willows which he knew Stella held sacred as his. For more than twelve years Ireland meant for him peace in the middle of difficulty and the stress of battle. No doubt, had England and English preferment been banished from his mind, he would have welcomed the idea of promotion in the Irish Church, but so long as England remained the centre of life, Swift longed for office there. Hence in 1713 he was bitterly disappointed when he found that Ireland was for the future to be the sphere in which he was to move. On his arrival in Dublin his worst expectations were fulfilled, the land of barbarians received him in a most uncivilized manner. No doubt the people had forgotten his success in the matter of the Irish First-Fruits, or probably, as it only affected directly a small number of the Irish population, the rest did not take into account Swift's share in the transaction. He was received as a Jacobite, and was in danger of violence from the mob. From this time Ireland became a country where Swift knew no rest. The sphere of storm and stress was transferred. Ireland became a land of trouble. With it came to be connected Swift's saddest memories, the tragedies of his life.

The period of his life through which he had just passed must be accounted the happiest, or perhaps the only really happy years of his life, even though throughout all this time his heart was torn by conflicting emotions and the ambitions and self-interests of other men must perforce affect, if not influence, all his actions. For three years of his life in England he had been the centre of interest, the most fêted and popular figure in political centres. All the world had bowed before him, he had been welcomed everywhere in political centres. His word and favour had been accepted in preference to those of any other man. What a change now! Lord Orrery writes: "But Dr. Swift had little reason to rejoice in the land where his lot had fallen: for, upon his arrival in Ireland to take possession of the deanery, he found the violence of party raging in that kingdom to the highest degree. The common people were taught to look upon him as a Jacobite, and they proceeded so far in their detestation, as to throw stones and dirt at him as he passed through the streets. The chapter of St. Patrick's, like the rest of the kingdom, received him with great reluctance. They thwarted him in every point that he proposed. He was avoided as a pestilence. He was opposed as an invader. He was marked out as an enemy to his country. Such was his first reception as Dean of St. Patrick's. Fewer talents and less firmness, must have yielded to so outrageous an opposition, *sed contra audentior ibat*. He had seen enough of human nature, to be convinced that the passions of low, self-interested minds

ebb and flow continually." Lord Orrery continues with a slight rhapsody on human nature. "They love they know not whom, they hate they know not why : they are captivated by words : guided by names, and governed by accidents. Sacheverell and the Church had been of as great service to one party in the year 1710, as popery and slavery were to the other in the year 1713. But, to show you the strange revolution in this world, Dr. Swift, who was now the detestation of the Irish rabble, lived to be afterwards the most absolute monarch over them that ever governed men. His first step was to reduce to reason and obedience his reverend brethren, the chapter of St. Patrick's, in which he succeeded so perfectly and so speedily that in a short time after his arrival, not one member of that body offered to contradict him, even in trifles. On the contrary, they held him in the highest respect and veneration, so that he sat in the Chapter-house like Jupiter in the Synod of the Gods. Whether fear or conviction were the motives of so immediate a change, I leave you to consider, but certain it is." Swift stayed no longer in Ireland than the time demanded by his installation, and, as Lord Orrery has it, "to pass through certain customs and formalities," or to use his own words :—

" Through all vexation  
Patents, Instalments, Abjurations,  
First Fruits, and Tenth's, and chapter-treats,  
Dues, Payments, Fees, Demands and cheats ! "

He then returned to England to attempt to pacify

the Tory ministers, but he met with no permanent success. He returned to Ireland, as it seemed to him, to begin life over again. It has been the lot of few men perhaps to suffer such a complete break in their lives as Swift suffered in his removal to Dublin. Few men have had the divisions of youth, maturity and old age so strongly marked. For him these periods of his life were so distinctly divided that we might well say of him that he lived three lives ; but, alas for his happiness, the middle period, the only one in which he found life really congenial, was by far the shortest, and the last period, when the aspirations of youth, the time of castle-building, were far behind, must have seemed infinitely the longest. Swift's attitude to his future life in Ireland may seem strange to us who live under entirely different conditions. For an English clergyman to enter on an Irish Deanery now, at the age of forty-six, active politician though he had been, and though his new life meant a temporary separation from English friends, would not appear a great hardship. It would mean merely that he transferred his energies, then at their best and highest, to a new field, with all the benefit of past experience to help him ; the facilities of transit, moreover, are so easy that the distance from the centre of his former activities would only mean additional pleasure in seeing his old friends again. But what did it mean to Swift ? It meant complete separation from everything that he cared for. Let us try for one moment to put ourselves in his place, to assume, as far as may be, his disposition and attitude to life. As we have

said elsewhere, in the middle of the eighteenth century a man began to enter upon old age at forty-five, to assume the characteristics of an old man, to allow excuses to be made for a lack of energy, on the ground of increasing years. He began to think of resting upon hardly-won laurels in the circle in which he had hitherto moved. A prebend's stall at Windsor would have given Swift opportunity for this kind of retirement from life. He appears at this time to have been a contradiction in terms. Convention, that long-established dealer in temporary values, demanded that his faculties should be wearing out. Swift, the ascetic, in the midst of men of an early maturity achieved by profligacy, refused to acknowledge any symptoms of decay. Apart from intermittent attacks of vertigo, from which he had suffered since his boyhood, he was at his best; wishful for wider and greater scope for his energies rather than for a smaller field. He knew, too, as only highly nervous people can know, that when once the impetus for work is removed, the character suffers loss, and the power of work is for a time in abeyance, until another impetus is provided. Life in Ireland meant permanent separation from two, at least, of the men to whom he was attached by very strong bonds of affection. It meant long periods of separation from all his other English friends, and he knew he would gradually disappear from the central place in their thoughts. He must have thought with an almost savage despair that many would be glad of his departure, chiefly those whose pride he had hurt by his integrity and honesty.



He was about to be driven into exile from the only home he had ever known or would know, a place, won, as he thought, in the hearts and affections of hundreds. Pride, wounded at the thought that England could do without him, added fuel to the flame, kindled now by indignation, now by sorrow. He had been looked on almost as the saviour of his country. He was now met by yells of execration from those who greeted him as traitor and Jacobite. The great things of life, as he looked at them, had been his, now he was to concentrate his thoughts on the small things. For seven years he concentrated himself on these little things in the bitterness of his heart, performing all the duties of his office with the utmost punctiliousness and unfailing conscientiousness. It is no small credit to him that he could cast aside the searchings of heart and bitterness of regret to produce in this last period his greatest literary masterpiece, and to win, perhaps, his greatest political triumph. It can be so called because it implied, as none other of his political feats had done, the benefit of suffering humanity and the rescue from starvation of a whole people.

There were elements in his exile the full importance of which even Swift could not calculate. If party animosity was violent in England, it was ten times more so in Ireland. All the stories against the Government in England, authenticated or untrue, were believed and exaggerated in Ireland. "The dreadful and detested days of James II.," says Sheridan, "of which there were still so many and

living witnesses in that kingdom, and in which the whole body of Protestants suffered so much, came first into their minds, and raised the utmost abhorrence of all who were supposed to be abettors of such a measure. They were taught to consider the word Tory and Jacobite as synonymous terms, and as Swift was known to have been highly in the confidence of the late ministry, he was of course supposed to have been deeply concerned with them in the plot for bringing in the Pretender: being the only one then in Ireland against whom a charge could be made of having an immediate hand in such a design, he became the chief object upon which the madness of party vented its rage." Feeling against him ran so high apparently that he was attacked by the mob, with their usual methods, and by those in higher circles in a more invidious manner. There is one record or petition addressed by him, "To the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled," against a certain nobleman Lord Blaney, who had arranged a violent attack on him. The Petition shows that the Dean was in constant danger at the hands of this man, who, strangely enough, had received considerable help from him some years before. Nothing perhaps hurt Swift so much as the ingratitude of those whom he helped. He was so far unpractical that he expected to meet with gratitude, and was even hurt when he failed to find it. As he gained a footing in Ireland he endeavoured to carry on the policy which he had adopted in

England, of helping all who stood in need of it. Thus, both in England and Ireland, he was of use to many Whigs, and the greater was his chagrin to find that he was treated entirely as an enemy by this party in Ireland. He expressed this feeling in a letter to Archbishop King: "If my friendship and conversation were equally shewn among those who liked or disapproved the proceeding then at Court, and that I was known to be a common friend of all deserving persons of the latter sort, when they were in distress, I cannot but think it hard that I am not suffered to run quietly among the herd of people, whose opinions unfortunately differ from those which leaned to favour and preferment." One of the greatest hardships arising for Swift out of the hostility to him was the deprivation of the friendship of many who might have been of much use to him in his new position. Thus to a great extent he was cut off from society, and his only course was to bury himself within the duties of his Deanery, "without once casting an eye towards the publick," says Sheridan. In a letter to Pope, in the year 1721, Swift wrote: "In a few weeks after the loss of that excellent Princess, I came to my station here, where I have continued ever since in the greatest privacy, and utter ignorance of those events which are most commonly talked of in the world. I neither know the names or number of the family which now reigneth, further than the Prayer-book informeth me. I cannot tell who is Chancellor, who are Secretaries, nor with what nation we are in peace

or war. And this manner of life was not taken up out of any sort of affectation, but merely to avoid giving offence, and for fear of provoking party zeal." He had time, however, to think of his former friends. In 1715 he wrote to Pope: "You know how well I loved both Lord Oxford and Bolingbroke, and how dear the Duke of Ormonde is to me: and do you imagine I can be easy while their enemies are endeavouring to take off their heads? *I nunc & versus tecum meditare canoros.* Do you imagine I can be easy, when I think on the probable consequences of these proceedings, perhaps upon the very peace of the nation, but certainly of the minds of so many hundred thousand good subjects?" To Gay he writes: "I was three years reconciling myself to the scene, and the business, to which fortune hath condemned me, and stupidity was that I had recourse to." He gives a depressing account of himself. "I would describe to you my way of living, if any method could be called so in this country. I choose my companions among those of least consequence and most compliance: I read the most trifling books I can find, and when I write, it is upon the most trifling subjects: but riding, walking and sleeping take up eighteen of the twenty-four hours; I procrastinate more than I did twenty years ago, and have several things to finish, which I put off to twenty years hence." The warning which Swift uttered at the end of these seven years of unwilling retirement testified to the benefit which he received. Perhaps, too, the energies allowed to slumber in

these years culminated in "Gulliver's Travels." We cannot, therefore, be altogether dissatisfied, though the thought of this enforced inactivity brings with it much sadness. It is an unnatural thing for a thoroughly able man to be compelled, except through illness, to take a period of seven years out of his life apparently for no purpose whatever. We must, to some extent, consider as lost these years of Swift's life. Their record is to be found in the trifles which he wrote to Dr. Sheridan and in the more serious letters to Oxford and others of his English circle, among whom were numbered Bolingbroke, Addison, Arbuthnot, Prior, Pope, Lewis, the Duchess of Ormonde, and Lady Bolingbroke. That all his thoughts were centred in them we have very decided testimony in his letters. In 1715 he wrote to Oxford imploring him to allow him to be with him in prison. "My lord, it may look like an idle or officious thing in me, to give your Lordship any interruption under your present circumstances; yet I could never forgive myself, if, after having been treated for several years with the greatest kindness and distinction, by a person of your Lordship's virtue, I should omit making you at this time the humblest offers of my poor service and attendance. It is the first time I ever solicited you in my own behalf; and if I am refused, it will be the first request you ever refused me." Oxford could not, however, take advantage of this offer. He wrote, therefore, on being released from the Tower in 1717:—

"Two years' retreat has made me taste the conversation of my dearest friend, with a greater relish than

even at the time of my being charmed with it in our frequent journeys to Windsor. My heart is often with you, but I delayed writing in expectation of giving a perfect answer about my going to Brampton, but the truth is the warmth of rejoicing in these parts is so far from abating, that I am persuaded by my friends to go up to Cambridgeshire, where you are too just not to believe you will be welcome before any one in the world. The longing your friends have to see you must be submitted to the judgment yourself makes of all circumstances. At present this seems to be a cooler climate than your island is like to be when they assemble, etc. Our impatience to see you should not draw you into uneasiness. We long to embrace you, if you find it may be of no inconvenience to yourself. "OXFORD."

Bolingbroke wrote to him in a letter which has been quoted in another connection. "I know not whether the love of fame increases as we advance in age; sure I am that the force of friendship does. I loved you almost twenty years ago; I thought of you as well as I do now, better was beyond the power of conception."

He was distressed at this time by the account of Prior's misfortunes, and did everything possible to promote a design for publishing his works by subscription. As Sheridan sententiously remarks: "What an instance is here of the vicissitudes in human affairs, when a man who had been Ambassador Plenipotentiary to the Court of France should, in the



THE DEAN'S WELL, LARACOR



REMAINS OF SWIFT'S HOUSE, SWIFTBROOK, THE HOME OF  
THE SWIFT FAMILY



WOODPARK, DUBLIN, THE RESIDENCE OF CHARLES FORD



DELAVALLE HOUSE, GLASNEVIN, THE HOME OF  
DR. DELANEY





space of a few years, be reduced to such a sorry expedient (as Swift terms it) to keep him above want." He also occupied himself at this time with two pamphlets on behalf of the late ministry. One was "Memoirs relating to that change which happened in the Queen's Ministry in the year 1710." The other "An Enquiry into the behaviour of the Queen's last Ministry, with relation to their quarrels among themselves, and the design charged upon them of altering the succession of the Crown." By these two treatises he wished to expose the main springs of Government procedure during that time, and to exonerate them from the charge, now so loudly bruited, of a design to bring back the Pretender. No doubt they were very effective in putting the late Government on a better footing; they are valuable to us because they constitute the whole of Swift's serious literary output during these seven years.

In the year 1721, however, his period of retirement came to an end. He had established his position, and there was no longer any real danger of an attack upon him on party questions. During this time he was meditating on a project which he accomplished a few years later. Injustice of any kind was always sufficient to arouse in Swift a feeling of indignation and generally an expression of it. Thus the fact that the Irish were suffering from most unjust oppression at the hands of England, was considered by Swift a sufficient motive for action. Though he hated his fellow countrymen, as we must call them, yet their wrongs could wring from him

expressions of the deepest sympathy, and could make him conduct on their behalf a crusade against abstract injustice, and concrete English tyranny.

England's attitude towards Ireland was then, as it is now, inexplicable. Unjust hatred of a people too generous to return it, jealousy of the natural rights of that people, and probably the rankling sense of the inferiority of the English character, stirred the English nation to open hostility against the Irish. It is a paradox to assert that it is a religious hatred. England's attitude to Ireland was the attitude of the governing class to a subject race, with elements of smallness in it unworthy of a dominant people. It can only be illustrated by the fable of the dog in the manger. It was more true of England then than it is now.

In the year 1721 Swift began his Irish campaign, no doubt greatly to the annoyance of the English Government, who looked on him as safely occupied over the water. In that year he published his first political tract on behalf of Ireland entitled, "A proposal for the Universal use of Irish manufactures." In this he carefully avoided touching on party matters, and pointed out that the remedy against their distress was in the hands of the Irish themselves. It was sufficient to cause instant alarm in England, as Swift himself wrote to Pope. "I have written in this kingdom, a discourse to persuade the wretched people to wear their own manufactures, instead of those from England. This treatise soon spread very fast, being agreeable to the sentiments

of the whole nation, except of those gentlemen who had employments, or were expectant. Upon which a person of great office here, immediately took the alarm; he sent in haste for the Chief Justice, and informed him of a seditious, factious, and virulent pamphlet, lately published with a design of setting the two kingdoms at variance; directing at the same time that the printer should be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law. The Chief Justice has so quick an understanding that he resolved, if possible, to outdo his orders. The grand juries of the country and city were effectually practised with, to represent the said pamphlet with all aggravating epithets, for which they had thanks sent them from England, and their presentments published, for several weeks, in all the newspapers. The printer was seized, and forced to give great bail. After his trial, the Jury brought him in Not Guilty, although they had been culled with the utmost industry: the Chief Justice sent them back nine times, and kept them eleven hours, until, being perfectly tired out, they were forced to leave the matter to the mercy of the Judge, by what they call a special verdict. During the trial the Chief Justice, among other singularities, laid his hand on his breast, and protested solemnly that the Author's design was to bring in the Pretender, although there was not a single syllable of party in the whole treatise; and although it was known that the most eminent of those who possessed his own principles, publicly disallowed his proceedings. But the cause being so very odious and unpopular, the

trial of the verdict was deferred from one term to another, until upon the Duke of Grafton's, the Lord Lieutenant's, arrival, his Grace, after mature advice and permission from England was pleased to grant a *Noli prosequi*."

This outburst was sufficient to show Swift that the embers of party feeling were only smouldering, and he withdrew into his former retirement after exposing the Chief Justice. Yet, as Sheridan aptly puts it, "His heart was constantly crowded with the scenes of misery which surrounded him: and his patriotic spirit thus confined, proved only as an evil one to torment him." Swift's attitude at this time is characteristically illustrated by Dr. Delany. He tells the story of a call which he paid on Swift one day, when he was asked "'whether the corruptions and villainies of men in power did not eat his flesh and exhaust his spirits?'" Was answered, "That in truth they did not." He then asked in a fury, "Why—why, how can you help it? How can you avoid it?" Delany calmly replied, "Because I am commanded to the contrary. *Fret not thyself because of the ungodly.*"

Probably the literary sterility of this period was due partly to the fact that at this time Swift was in great difficulties owing to the importunity of Miss Vanhomrigh. For three years she kept up a continual series of attacks on him. Her death in the year 1723 removed from his path the woman who, by the mischief of which she was capable, was a constant source of danger to his happiness and that

of Stella. It is impossible to lament her death. Let those sentimentalists grieve who see in every man an artful villain with designs on a woman's honour and happiness, and in every sentimental woman an injured saint. We cannot.

The time has now come for Swift's *coup d'état* in Ireland.

As in estimating Swift's influence on English politics an account of the general condition of the country and of her place in European politics was necessary, so a sketch, however brief, of Ireland at this period, is essential to the comprehension of his work there.

The union with Scotland had brought about a permanent reconciliation of our old antagonism with that country. There were wars and rumours of wars down to 1745, but the union has never since been in any serious way in jeopardy. Prof. Seeley considers this was and has been due to the fact that when the Union was under discussion Scotland had somewhat wherewithal to treat. In 1703, the Act of Security had provided that Scotland was not under the necessity of accepting the successor of Queen Anne as sovereign of Scotland, "unless there be such condition of Government settled and enacted as may secure the honour and sovereignty of this crown and kingdom, the freedom, frequency and power of parliament, the religion, freedom and trade of the nation from English or any foreign influence."

Since the union with Scotland was all essential if the North was not to become the permanent

home of Jacobitism, that country was in 1707 granted commercial equality. Had some farseeing statesmen adopted the same course in Ireland—the history of our relations with that country during the past 200 years might have been strangely different. Commercial jealousy had in the one case to give way to political necessity—in the other political necessity decided to use commercial jealousy as a means whereby it could free itself from its difficulties. And the difficulties were these: Ireland professed the creed of the rival claimant to the English throne, she had been in open rebellion against the Revolution settlement, and her trade was in rivalry with that of the English producer. She must be put under close restraint. It was no new policy towards Ireland, but from 1699 onwards it was pursued with ferocious vindictiveness. In 1663 Ireland had been excluded from the Navigation Act, and no Irish cattle or dairy produce were allowed an entrance to the English market, nor could colonial produce be imported into Ireland save through an English port. Ireland, in despair, had turned to sheep-rearing—thereupon, in 1699, the English Parliament prohibited the export of Irish wool to any foreign country, and imposed a prohibitive tariff at the few English ports where entrance was allowed. The result was a huge exodus from the country, twenty to thirty thousand were thrown on charity. The moral effect upon the country was to produce apathy. The Irish Catholics constituted three quarters of the population, and were devoid of

all political and civil rights. They could hold no military or civil office, they must not possess arms, or a horse worth more than £5. Catholic education and the presence of bishops were prohibited. Added to this, one-third of the rental was spent out of the country by absentee landlords. Absenteeism was no new trouble in Ireland. Richard II. and Henry VIII. had both legislated against it, but to such an extent had it grown in the eighteenth Century that even office-holders were absentees, and place-hunting was so flagrant that, as Swift remarked, bad as England was in this respect, it was "a kingdom of saints as compared to Ireland. We are slaves and knaves, and all but bishops and people in employment, beggars. The few honest men among us are dead-hearted, poor, and out of favour and power."

The condition of the Anglican Church in Ireland was deplorable. The Bishops, who possessed one-nineteenth of the whole soil, were wealthy, but only too frequently absentee. The clergy were miserably poor, their livings, even when plural, rarely exceeding £100 a year. For the most part the Bishops were Whigs and the parsons Tories. Only one-third of the non-Catholics were Anglicans, but the Test Act of 1703 shut out all others from power.

The condition of the peasantry may be read in Swift's own pamphlet, "A short view of the State of Ireland." He begins the pamphlet with an enumeration of fourteen things which go towards the making of a prosperous country, and all who

have the interest of Ireland at heart should carefully read them and consider how far their adoption would not result in a happier Ireland to-day. "Any traveller," he says, "coming to Ireland might imagine himself, from the poverty of the people, in Lapland or Iceland. Desolation reigns supreme, the old seats of the nobility in ruins; farmers and their families who pay heavy rents live in filth and nastiness." One of the popular ideas in England about Ireland was that it was a rich country, largely due to the fact that a round million made its way to England with no expenditure on her part, and to the presence of wealthy bankers who bled the country of the little gold it possessed; "they have sent away all our silver and one-third of our gold." When guests come from England they mostly stay with rich folk, and "go home and report that we wallow in riches and luxury. Yet I confess I have known an hospital where all the household officers grew rich, while the poor, for whose sake it was built, were almost starving for want of food and raiment."

Lecky, quoting from the Southwell correspondence, says that in 1702 so poor were the towns that it was feared the court mourning for William III. would be the last blow.

"The poor," says Sheridan, "are sunk to the lowest degrees of misery and poverty, their houses dunghills, their victuals the blood of their cattle, or the herbs of the field." Blood and sorrel were boiled up together. Burdy gives a case where a man, to feed his wife and children, bled his neighbour's cattle.



Further, the country was embittered by the intense hatred shown to one another by the rival sects and churches, by Whigs and Tories. Swift says, "There is hardly a Whig in Ireland who would allow a potato and butter-milk to a reputed Tory." Discord reigned supreme where co-operation was of the first importance. The misery of it all entered like a hot iron into Swift's very soul. "It fevered his blood, it broke his rest, it drove him at times half frantic with furious indignation, it sunk him at times in abysses of sullen despondency, it awoke in him emotions which in ordinary men are seldom excited save by personal injuries."

For seven years after his arrival in Ireland, regarded as a Jacobite, sometimes in fear of arrest, he lay quiet, fulfilling his duties as Dean of St. Patrick's.

During those seven years a national party in Ireland had gradually come into existence. It had little coherence, but to gain this it only required, as the Tory party in England years before, a strong leader and a powerful pen. The English ministry under Walpole, bent on extirpating in Ireland every trace of national feeling and independence, had embarked upon a policy of "thorough." They would rule Ireland by means of an English clique established in Dublin. The Irish Church, a stronghold of Toryism, must be weakened. For this purpose they brought forward in the Irish Parliament a bill granting toleration to Presbyterians. It passed the Council only by the Lord-Lieutenant's casting vote. It passed, said the Archbishop of Dublin (King), by the votes of "our

brethren lately sent us out of England." In the same year the Appellate Jurisdiction of the Irish House of Peers was taken away. By the governing clique the Irish gentry were treated with absolute contempt.

In 1720 the country awoke at last from its sleep and, sinking smaller differences, united in an endeavour to throw off restrictions on legislation and on trade. Swift threw himself heart and soul into the work. His campaign, as has been previously stated, opened with a pamphlet entitled, "A proposal for the Universal use of Irish manufactures in cloathes and furniture of houses, and utterly rejecting and renouncing everything wearable that comes from England." Its object is sufficiently indicated by its title. If the Irish might not export their produce, let them use it themselves and "burn everything that came from England except coals and the people." "Let a firm resolution be taken by male and female, never to appear with one single shred that comes from England, and let all the people say Amen." The Scripture tells us "that oppression makes a wise man mad. Therefore consequently speaking the reason why some men are not mad is because they are not wise. However, it were to be wished that oppression would in time teach a little wisdom to fools." The whole country is suffering from tyranny, the landlord himself is a slave. "Slaves have a natural disposition to be tyrants, and when my betters give me a kick I am apt to revenge it with six upon my footman, although, perhaps, he may be an honest and diligent fellow." Universal oppression prevailed. "Whoever travels this country

and observes the force of nature, or the faces, habits and dwellings of the natives, will hardly think himself in a land where law, religion or common humanity, is professed." Swift was not blind to the faults of the Irish farmer and peasant. How they wore out their ground by over ploughing, and took no care to manure as they ought, and how when they found their leases were not to be renewed, they would plough up the very meadows. The land being exhausted, was given over to grazing, so that a few herdsmen got the livelihood of one hundred men. Hence the importation of corn from England, and wool a drug in the Irish market. And yet he defends the Irishman from the charge so often still brought against him of laziness. "You can't call a man lazy if he can find nothing to do." The pamphlet was a long, bitterly sarcastic exposure of Irish wrongs. The Government was incensed, and at once instituted proceedings against the printer. The jury refused to find him guilty of publishing a seditious, factious and virulent pamphlet.

One of the many grievances under which Ireland suffered was the granting of patents to coin copper money to private individuals. Scotland had its own mint, which was specially provided for in the Act of Union. To Ireland, in spite of her frequent appeals for a mint, from which could be issued coins of the same standard and intrinsic value as those used in England, this right was denied. In 1705 one, Knox, to whom the patent had been granted for twenty-one years, sold his right to a certain Colonel Moore, who forthwith flooded the country with copper money.

In 1720, whether owing to a scarcity of copper as some assert or to an absence of silver, it was quite certain that there was very little small change in circulation. The memorial which was presented to the Lords of the Treasury and upon which they acted, complains only of the condition of the copper coinage, and of the evils of private minting. The position is made quite clear by the following extract from Archbishop King's letter.

"As to our wanting halfpence for change, it is most false, we have more halfpence than we need already ; it is true we want change, but it is sixpences, shillings, half-crowns, our silver and our guineas being almost gone. The general coin of the country being magdores, which are thirty shillings a piece—at least ninepence above the value in silver—they would now have us change them for halfpence, and so the whole cash of the kingdom would be these halfpence."

The attempt evidently was to impose a copper coinage on Ireland. The patent, which was to hold good for fourteen years, was granted to the Duchess of Kendal, the reigning favourite, and she sold it to Wood for £10,000 and perhaps a share in the profits. This was one of Walpole's little jobs. Wood had the right to issue £108,000 worth of farthings and halfpence. The amount was ludicrous, as the whole circulating medium of Ireland was at this time under half a million sterling, and it was suspected that Wood would increase his profits by debasing the coinage. In any case Ireland's scanty store of gold

and silver would be lost, and foreign exchanges would be turned against the country.

The Commissioners of Revenue in Dublin at once took alarm, and memorialized the Lord-Lieutenant that "such a patent would be highly prejudicial to the trade and welfare of this kingdom and more particularly to his Majesty's Revenue, which they had found to have suffered very much by too great a quantity of such base coin." As no reply was forthcoming, they memorialized the Lords of the Treasury, adding to the above that "there did not appear the least want of such small pieces of coin for change." To this there was no reply, and Wood's money began to arrive.

The Irish House of Parliament next took up the matter, declared that in the first place the money was not required, and that it was debased. Moreover, it was highly prejudicial to make these grants to private persons or corporations.

To these resolutions Walpole was bound to pay attention, and a Committee of the Privy Council was appointed to inquire into the coinage.

Before they had time to issue their report Swift had raised the whole country in revolt. Out came the famous Drapier letters, the first addressed to the shopkeepers and common people in Ireland, "*very proper to be kept in every family*," in which he urged them to refuse to accept Mr. Wood's brass halfpence. The collectors of the King's customs had refused this money, all the kingdom must abominate it. As for himself he intends to revert to barter rather than use

it. "These blood-suckers will suck all the good money out of the country. And yet the tenants of this country are bound by their leases to pay sterling, which is lawful current money of England. You will all be undone if you be so foolish and wicked as to take this cursed coin. The laws have not given the Crown a power of forcing the subjects to take what money the king pleases—for then we might be bound to take pebble stones or cockle-shells. By the law of England, according to my Lord Coke, no subject can be forced to take any money but of lawful metal, *i.e.* of silver and gold; therefore, my friends, stand to it one and all, refuse this filthy trash. It is no treason to rebel against Mr. Wood."

The effect of this pamphlet was instantaneous; from Cork to Londonderry, from Galway to Dublin, Ireland was in a blaze.

Then the news leaked out that the Government intended a compromise, that Wood was not to issue more than £40,000, that legal tender was to be fixed at 5½*d.* The report of the assayists had been sent in. The assay, however, had been made only on those coins issued between March, 1723-1724, and these coins had never been uttered in Ireland; even so they had reported that "although the copper was very good and the money one piece with another was full weight, yet the single pieces were not so equally coined in the weight as they should have been." This last sentence was suppressed in the Report of the Privy Council. We can well imagine that Swift was fairly accurate when he denounced

the money which really reached Ireland, as brass. And yet Swift has been roundly accused by Mr. Birkbeck Hill of lying when he denounced the coin as being base.

The real point, however, at issue was not a financial one but, as Mr. Churton Collins points out, political. "Nothing can be more certain than that it was Swift's design from the very beginning to make the controversy with Wood the basis of far more extensive operations." It had furnished him with the means of waking Ireland from lethargy into fiery life. He looked to it to furnish him with the means of raising her from servitude to independence, from ignominy to honour. Would that spirit be prematurely quenched when the news of the compromise arrived? The spark must not be quenched, the second Drapier letter appeared to counteract the effect of the Report which was shortly to reach Dublin. In it "he tore the whole case of his opponents to shreds with a skill that would have done honour to Demosthenes." We cannot do more here than glance at this pamphlet, masterly as it is, but a few extracts must be given. In the compromise Wood had promised to coin no more than £40,000 worth, "unless the exigencies of trade require it, to which if I were to answer, it would be thus. Let Mr. Wood and his crew of founders and tinkers coin on until there is not an old kettle left in the kingdom: let them coin old leather, tobacco pipes, clay or dirt in the streets, and call their trumpery what they please from a guinea to a farthing, we

are not under any concern to know how he and his tribe of accomplices think fit to employ themselves. We are determined not to use his ware. This little arbitrary mock monarch most graciously offers to take our manufactures in exchange, to remove our direful apprehensions that he will drain us of gold and silver. Is not this just what we complain of? His cursed project will put us under the necessity of selling our goods for what is equal to nothing. When he talks of exigencies of trade he must mean his own: this poor little kingdom is never consulted . . . a whole kingdom is being kept in awe, not by plague or a famine, not by a tyrannical prince, but by one single, diminutive, insignificant mechanic. . . . It is no dishonour to submit to the lion, but who, with the figure of a man, can think with patience of being devoured alive by a rat?"

Then we get a sentence in which Swift shows his true goal. "If his copper were diamonds and the kingdom were entirely against it, would not that be sufficient to reject it?"

This theme he develops in the third letter, addressed to the nobility and gentry of Ireland. "Supposing," he says, "such a dispute had arisen in England and the Houses of Parliament and the Privy Council there had besought his Majesty to recall such a patent, would any minister dare advise him against recalling such a patent? Were not the people of Ireland born as free as those of England? How have they forfeited their freedom?"



Is not their parliament as fair a representative of the people as that of England? Are they not subjects of the same King? Am I a free man in England, and do I become a slave in six hours by crossing the Channel?"

In the fourth letter he goes still further. "By the laws of God, of Nature, of Nations, and of your country, you are and ought to be as free a people as your brethren in England." "All government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery." The letter concludes with a piece of admirable fooling.

"Wood has written that 'Mr. Walpole will cram this brass down our throats—we must take these halfpence or eat our brogues'—in the same letter we read that the same great man hath sworn to make us swallow his coin in fireballs! As the Scotchman said when he heard his death sentence with all the circumstances of hanging, beheading, quartering, disembowellings and the like, 'What need of all this cookery?' Here is a dinner getting ready for us. There must be some mistake, however; for instance, swallowing their halfpence in fireballs, it is so improbable, for to execute this operation the whole stock of Mr. Wood's coin and metal must be melted down and moulded into hollow balls, with wild-fire, no bigger than a reasonable throat can be able to swallow. He has coined fifty million ha'pence, to be swallowed by a million and half of people, so that, allowing two ha'pence to each ball, there will be seventeen balls of wild-fire apiece, to be swallowed

by every person in this kingdom, and to administer this dose there cannot be conveniently fewer than fifty thousand operators, allowing one operator to every thirty, which considering the squeamishness of some stomachs and the peevishness of young children is but reasonable. I think the trouble and charge of such an experiment would exceed the profit."

The country was aflame; all classes banded together to resist Wood's ha'pence; the very newsboys refused it. They were on the rack, as Swift said, but they claimed the liberty of roaring as loudly as they liked.

Lord Carteret, who had arrived to replace Grafton in the Lord-Lieutenancy, was obliged to take action. Three hundred pounds reward was offered for the discovery of the author of this wicked and malicious pamphlet. There was no doubt of the authorship, but the Government dared not touch Swift. He was the idol of the people. On the heels of the proclamation the following placard appeared: "And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not."

Harding the printer was arrested; twice the grand jury threw out the bill against him, on the second occasion presenting Wood's ha'pence as a common nuisance. Swift's triumph was complete. "I have

his Majesty's commands to acquaint you that an entire end is put to the patent formerly granted to Mr. Wood ;" so spake the Viceroy at the opening of Parliament. Medals were struck in Swift's honour, his birthday was kept every year "with tumultuous festivity," if he visited a town for the first time he was received with public honours.

But during this time he was busy with other matters as well ; he became the acknowledged champion of the Irish clergy, opposing any attempt which the Whig bishops made at their expense to aggrandize themselves. He fought for them against the aggression of their landlords, whilst at the same time he was earnest in all matters of reform, striving to infuse a spirit of independence.

England, however, was determined to govern Ireland by Englishmen in the interests of England and Archbishop Boulter, of Armagh, the Primate, became her instrument, bent on rooting out Catholicism. Against such influence, Swift was powerless, and the country sank further and further into the mire of misrule.

In 1726, Swift paid his last visit to England, and interviewed Walpole. What passed is not known. If, as doubtless he did, Swift laid before him his opinions on Ireland, they met with no favour from Walpole. There seems to have been some offer made to Swift, for he wrote Sheridan : "I have had the fairest offer made me of settlement here that one can imagine within twelve miles of London in the midst of my friends, but I am too old for new schemes,

especially such as would bridle me in any freedom." He never for a moment allowed self-interest to weigh against duty and principle. His popularity in London was great; both parties were anxious to secure his services. Bolingbroke and Pulteny on the one hand, Walpole on the other, for the death of George I. was hourly expected. When George II. ascended the throne and Walpole was re-established, Swift quitted England for ever. For Ireland the same misrule was to continue. Swift's influence in politics was at an end. Public offices were filled with Englishmen, bribery and corruption were rampant in Parliament. In 1729, after three bad harvests, a terrible famine broke out, and the people died in thousands. Swift was beside himself with indignation at the apathy of England. The Government, to get rid of the Roman Catholic population of Ireland, had given leave to the King of France to send a recruiting officer into Ireland. The scheme, condemned by the Craftsman, received Swift's ironical support. "An Irishman costs as much as five pounds a year to feed, by all means let the King carry off six thousand; 'twould save the country thirty thousand a year. Let him take thirty thousand, forty thousand, fifty thousand; what an immense benefit!" In the same strain was written the pamphlet entitled "A modest proposal for preventing the children of Ireland from being a burden to their parents and country, and making them beneficial to the 'public.' Fatten them up for the Dublin market, they will be delicious roast, baked or boiled." "They are dying and rotting with cold and famine, let the landlords

see there is profit to be made out of them. It won't for once disoblige England—as such a commodity will not bear exportation. He has no children of his own, so he is quite disinterested, he says in the suggestion.” Perhaps it is of writing such as this that Lord Morley is thinking when he speaks of Swift's unholy and savage genius. The terms would be applied with more pertinence to the system of Government which could drive a man of eminent kindness of disposition to such a paroxysm of despair.

They say he hated Ireland “where all were either knaves or slaves.” Here again we have a misconception. He did not hate Ireland or the Irish, what he hated was the tyranny and oppression which it had become so utterly hopeless to alleviate. Had he hated the people themselves why this fierce anger at their wrongs? It is useless to quote the momentary outbursts of anger to which he gave way, as is done by some even of his most sympathetic biographers, in an attempt to prove that he loathed and disdained the Irish themselves. His work in Dublin city, if any proof were needed, proves the contrary. He regulated mendicity by means of badges, his private charity was boundless; “he never went abroad without a pocket full of coins which he distributed among the indigent and sick, whom he regularly visited.” “I know,” wrote Lord Carteret, “how much the city of Dublin thinks itself under your protection and how strictly they used to obey all orders fulminated from the sovereignty of St. Patrick's.”

He was the idol of the people. The Hon. John Wilson Croker thus wrote of him: "Ireland worshipped Swift with almost Persian idolatry. Sagacious and intrepid, he saw, he dared; above suspicion, he was trusted; above envy, he was beloved; above rivalry, he was obeyed. His wisdom was practical and prophetic, remedial for the present, warning for the future: he first taught Ireland that she might become a nation and England that she must cease to be a despot. But he was a Churchman. His gown impeded his course, and entangled his efforts; guiding a senate, or heading an army, he had been more than Cromwell, and Ireland not less than England. As it was he saved her by his courage, improved her by his authority, adorned her by his talents, and exalted her by his fame. His mission was but for ten years, and for ten years only did his personal power mitigate the Government; but though no longer feared by the great, he was not forgotten by the wise: his influence, his writings have survived a century, and the foundation of whatever prosperity we have since erected are laid in the disinterested and magnanimous patriotism of Swift."

This is not the description of a man who really hated the people amongst whom he dwelt. His hatred of and his indignation with all mankind were the outcome of his intense love, a love so great that the folly of their wickedness and unreasonableness lacerated his very heart and soul, driving him to such exasperation that both with pen and tongue he strove

with bitter sarcasm to awaken in them some sparks of righteousness and reason.

Swift had seen in all the reforms on which he embarked, the erroneous principle underlying the abuse, and on the abuse he took his stand, in order to assert the principle. He always saw, with an eye absolutely unerring, the canker at the root of the tree, and he refused to be deceived into attacking withered leaves and blighted blossoms. If the probe sometimes touched the quick, it is perhaps not a reprehensible fault. It is less open to comment than pulling off withered buds. Swift was able to do what few people are capable of doing. He applied his religious principles to life without one departure from the gospel of sanity. Thus it comes about that his sermon "On doing good" contains in it an ideal of patriotism higher than most ideals published in text-books on that subject. It is an essentially moral essay, somewhat Baconian in its ethics. "Nature directs every one of us, and God permits us, to consult our own private good before the private good of any other person whatsoever. We are, indeed, commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves; but not as well as ourselves. The love we have for ourselves is to be the pattern of that love we ought to have towards our neighbour; but as the copy doth not equal the original, so my neighbour cannot think it hard if I prefer myself, who am the original, before him who is only the copy. Thus, if any matter equally concern the life, the reputation, the profit of my neighbour and my own, the law of

nature, which is the law of God, obligeth me to take care of myself first, and afterwards of him. And this I need not be at much pains in persuading you, for the want of self-love with regard to things of this world, is not among the faults of mankind. But then, on the other side, if, by a small hurt and loss to myself, I can procure a great good to my neighbour, in that case, his interest is to be preferred. For example, if I can be sure of saving his life without great danger to my own: if I can preserve him from being undone without ruining myself: or recover his reputation without blasting mine—all this I am obliged to do, and, if I sincerely perform it, I do then obey the command of God, loving my neighbour as myself. But, besides this love we owe to every man in his particular capacity, under the title of our neighbour, there is yet a duty of a more large, extensive nature incumbent on us—our love to our neighbour in his public capacity, as he is a member of that great body, the Commonwealth, under the same government with ourselves, and this is usually called love of the public, and is a duty to which we are more strictly obliged than even that of loving ourselves, because wherein ourselves are also contained—as well as all our neighbours—is one great body. The love of the public, or of the Commonwealth, or love of our country, was in ancient time properly known by the name of virtue, because it was the greatest of all virtues, and was supposed to contain all virtues in it; and many great examples of this virtue are left us on record, scarcely to be



believed, or even conceived, in such a bare, corrupted, wicked age as this we live in. In those times it was common for men to sacrifice their lives for the good of their country, although they had neither hope nor belief of future rewards; whereas, in our days, very few make the least scruple of sacrificing a whole nation, as well as their own souls, for a little present gain—which often hath been known to end in their own ruin in this world, as it certainly must in that time to come. Have we not seen men for the sake of some petty employment give up the very natural rights and liberties of the country, and of mankind, in the ruin of which themselves must at last be involved? Are not these corruptions gotten among the meanest of our people, who for a piece of money will give their votes at a venture for the disposal of their own lives and fortunes, without considering whether it be those who are most likely to betray or defend them? But if I were to produce only one instance of a hundred where we fail in the duty of loving our country it would be an endless labour, and therefore I shall not attempt it." He defines loyalty still further—

"But here I would not be misunderstood. By the love of our country, I do not mean loyalty to our King, for that is a duty of another nature, and a man may be very loyal, in the common sense of the word, without one grain of public good in his heart. Witness this very kingdom we live in. I verily believe, that since the beginning of the world, no nation upon earth ever shewed (all circumstances

considered), such high constant marks of loyalty in all their action and behaviour as we have done; and at the same time, no people ever appeared more utterly void of what is called public spirit. When I say the people I mean the bulk or mass of the people, for I have nothing to do with those in power; therefore, I shall think my time not ill-spent if I can persuade most and all of you who hear me, to shew the love you have for your country by endeavouring in your several situations to do all the public good you can. For I am certainly persuaded that all our misfortunes arise from no other original cause than that general disregard among us to the public welfare."

What did loyalty mean to the Irish? It meant complete subjection of the Celtic temperament and character to what must in those days have been considered an alien power. If a people of this nature once becomes servile and loses its self-respect all is over with it. Indifference to its own interests means self-inflicted death, suicide under the most depressing circumstances. The fall of the Irish character, when it once enters on the down grade, is almost instantaneous and terribly complete. Such a character is capable of reaching the highest heights and of sinking to the lowest depths. Swift fully realized the necessity of raising the Irish self-esteem, he could see the effect which had been gradually produced by the repeated attacks of England upon Irish trade. The one thing needful was to give Ireland a high standard to maintain, and this he did. At the same time he won for himself a place in the affection of the

Irish people, such that they looked on him as the saviour of their country and the greatest benefactor of their people ever known. None of Ireland's later patriots has been so much beloved by this people of impulse and deep, strong affection. His untiring advocacy of their cause, his indignation at their wrongs, his complete surrender of himself to the cause of the Irish won them over to an allegiance from which they never once wavered. When once he had found a place deep down in their hearts he remained there for ever, while their love for him was passed on as a heritage to their children's children. While Swift was looked on in England as the saviour of a party, as the defender of the Church, and the upholder of England's position abroad: in Ireland he was looked on as the father of his people, the patron and defender of each individual home, and of every Irishman. Blessings were showered on him as he passed through the streets. All Ireland united to defend him.

But his work was over. With the "Modest Proposal" in 1729 his political work came to an end; with "Gulliver's Travels," published in 1727, his literary work of any importance came to an end. In 1728 the death of Stella deprived him of every hope of lasting happiness, and cast over his mind a veil of gloom never to be lifted.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FINALE

FOR the last seventeen years of his life we have to consider Swift as the Dean of St. Patrick's, devoid of all those public interests which so far have made his life. He has become a private individual. Many pessimists have drawn a picture of these last years as of a period of hopeless bitterness and misery. In fact they have surrounded him with all the sordid accompaniments of madness throughout this time. In so doing they have unthinkingly passed over a side of Swift's life which in some respects is full of brightness, and presents him in a very pleasant aspect. He was now sixty years of age, and indeed had entered on the period of old age of which he had always had only the most gloomy anticipations. The hopes of greatness which in his youth had buoyed him up, he could only consider as half-fulfilled, and he knew that nothing more could be his. Yet he could rest in the steadfast affection of his people. St. Patrick's Deanery formed the centre of a people who loved him, and to whom he was now drawn by ties of affection. The misanthropic expression of hatred which pervades "Gulliver's Travels" did not



DEAN SWIFT

FROM THE BUST IN ST. PATRICK'S DEANERY, DUBLIN



include individuals, but only mankind as a whole. When we consider Swift's personal relationship with his people we must perforce look on them as the individuals to whom his hatred did not extend. We have a pleasant picture of Swift surrounded at this time by the people who worshipped him. His life was rendered still more cheerful by a group of devoted friends, among whom are many interesting personages. Gay and Prior have been mentioned in another connection. Perhaps, too, they were not so closely connected as the rest of the circle which included Arbuthnot, Pope, Dr. Sheridan, and Dr. Delany. Minor members were Mrs. Delany and the Pilkingtons, of whom Mrs. Letitia Pilkington has become famous through her memoirs of Swift, unauthentic though many of them are. More subordinate characters in Swift's last years are Mrs. Whiteway, his housekeeper, and Mrs. Martha Blount, the friend of Pope.

The three men, Arbuthnot, Pope, and Dr. Sheridan, form a trio, each interesting to us, for his fascinating personality, and valuable for the life of Swift, as bringing out new sides to his character and adding new charms to his individuality. The rugged Dean with the dignity lent by his sixty years, in the middle of the circle of his intimate friends, is a picture over which we are inclined to linger pleasantly, unwilling to hasten the years which make for sadness. We are able to realize how venerable was his appearance from the two busts of him executed at this time. One stands in the Cathedral, the other in the Deanery.

The latter is, perhaps, the only representation of Dr. Swift which expresses the divine rather than the politician. The former shows us a strong, virile head, fully capable of all the work which Swift had accomplished. The mouth and eyes, expressing the capability and experience of the man of the world, would be hard, were they not redeemed by strongly humorous lines. Kindly humour is perhaps the prevailing expression. It is preeminently the representation of the Dean of St. Patrick's in the middle of the people who loved him.

The strong sense of humour was perhaps the saving element in his life at this time. It enabled him to respond to the same characteristic in his friends. Many were the jokes which these men played off on each other; probably they were characterized by breadth of humour fully appreciated both by the perpetrator and the victim.

A fuller account of Swift's friends may very well find a place here.

Arbuthnot, one of the leading physicians of the day, is one of the most interesting.

Thackeray's estimate of him as "one of the wisest, wittiest, most accomplished of mankind" is a true one. He moved in the circle of eighteenth-century wits, surpassed by none in intellectual attainments; greater than the majority in a sense of humour and a power of illustrating it; superior to all in humanity and gentleness of disposition. His profession of physician tended to smooth the "corners" of eccentricity. He comes before us as the Queen's physician, as a





QUEEN ANNE

AFTER THE PORTRAIT IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, DUBLIN



MRS. LETITIA PLUNKINGTON

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY NATHANIEL BONE IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, DUBLIN



mathematician of no mean attainments, as a kindly satirist, and as a friend of Swift and others, unfailing in sincerity of affection. There is a peculiar charm in these deep strong attachments between these men of the world. They form one of the special characteristics of the eighteenth century. One is tempted to let the imagination wander to classical times when we find again historic friendships between men, and we are struck once more by the strong resemblance between the age before us and that of Maecenas. The writers of these two periods seem to have had time to linger pleasantly over their work, to play with forms of literature. They loved to dally with the Muse as with a friend. They served her as devotees at a much-loved shrine. They had no thought of selling her into slavery in the market of utility. She was a deity to be worshipped, and at the same time a lovely maiden whom they could salute as friend in their lighter moments. She was a lady whom all treated more or less confidentially, as a friend whom they were glad to see at all times and on all occasions. They had no thought of treating her as a rather unwelcome poor relation, to be entertained as a matter of unpleasant duty for so many hours a day. The community of literary interests strengthened the tie and bound these friends more closely together.

Arbuthnot and Swift were well suited to each other. Both were endowed with an invaluable gift of satire, both were possessed of a disinterested affection for their fellowmen great enough to impel them to express it in action. Both found in their work an

interest of sufficient quality to raise them above the smallness of life. Perhaps an unusual combination! Both were essentially big men. John Arbuthnot was the son of a Scottish clergyman, a member of an old family of strong Stuart sympathies who had suffered much for their loyalty at the time of the revolution. He studied medicine and, by a stroke of good fortune, was appointed Physician to the Queen in 1705 in return for services rendered to Prince George of Denmark in a sudden attack of illness. As Queen's physician he met Swift, and the two men were drawn closely together from the beginning of their acquaintance. Their first combined literary effort was made in the story of the St. Alban's Ghost, an attack on the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. Later in 1727 the pamphlet "John Bull" appeared. It is not known for certain whether this was the combined work of Arbuthnot and Swift or of Arbuthnot alone. It is one of the finest satires of the period, humorous, trenchant, yet kindly. Arbuthnot would have been incapable of saying or doing anything of an unkind nature.

This pamphlet, famous because the name John Bull, invented by Arbuthnot, has clung to the British character ever since, contained a humorous account of the negotiations which led up to the Peace of Utrecht, representing the war of the Spanish Succession under the form of a lawsuit. Arbuthnot's other works comprised chiefly political pamphlets, best of which was that on Political lying, and the "Memoirs of Martin Scriblerus," to which Swift contributed. This was the account of the Scriblerus Club, of which

Arbuthnot and Swift were the founders. It is not, however, as the writer, that Arbuthnot rouses our interest, it is as the doctor and friend of Swift. He attended the Queen in her last illness when Dr. Radcliffe refused to commit himself to a display of energy sufficient to attend her. "Sleep was never more welcome to a weary traveller than death was to her," said Arbuthnot in his letter to Swift. His letters to the Dean form perhaps the best commentary on his character and provide the most interesting account of his friendship with Swift and others, notably Pope and Parnell. He shared the universal regret of the Dean's friends when he was removed from among them. As Swift's illness increased he became afflicted with a rather morbid desire to be forgotten by his friends, and to be allowed to sink out of their lives and memories. In answer to some expression of this desire Arbuthnot wrote: "I am sure I never can forget you till I meet with (which is impossible) another, whose conversation I can delight so much in as Dr. Swift's, and yet that is the smallest thing I ought to value you for. That hearty, sincere friendship, that plain and open ingenuity in all your converse, withal I am sure I never can find in another man. I shall want often a faithful monitor, one that would vindicate me behind my back, and tell me my faults to my face. God knows I write this with tears in my eyes. Yet do not be obstinate, but come for a little time to London, and if you must needs go, we may waste a manner of correspondence wherever we are."

Arbuthnot frequently had to play the part of

Barnabas. December 11, 1718, he wrote on the subject of Swift's illness. "My wife" (to whom he was very happily married) "gives you her kind love and service and, which is the first thing that occurs to all wives, wishes you were married."

In 1723, about the time of Vanessa's death when no doubt Swift felt that he was held up to scorn by many who did not understand the circumstances, Arbuthnot wrote: "You don't seem to know how very well you stand with our great folks. I have myself been at a great man's table, and have heard out the mouths of violent Irish Whigs, the whole table-talk turn upon your commendation."

Arbuthnot's affection was reciprocated by Swift, who wrote to Pope, September, 1725, during Arbuthnot's serious illness: "If the world had but a dozen Arbuthnots I would burn my 'Travels.' I pray God protect him, he is as fit a man either to live or die as ever I knew." The following October Arbuthnot wrote after his recovery: "The hope of seeing once more the Dean of St. Patrick's revives my spirits. I know of nearly half a year's dinners where you are already bespoke. I love and long to see you."

Some of this correspondence deals with the affairs of St. Patrick's. Arbuthnot used evidently to provide Swift with singers for his choir and to help him with other things. We can be quite sure that no details connected with the life of one was lacking in interest to the other. Swift, later, began to be a bad correspondent, much to Arbuthnot's

anxiety. Four years were allowed to elapse between Swift's much-looked-for letters.

In 1734 Arbuthnot's health began to fail. He achieved some little literary work. We have from his pen a scientific essay "Concerning the effects of the Air on Human Bodies," and he collaborated with Pope in the "Prologue to the Satires." This was the end of his literary work. He went to live at Hampstead, knowing that his life was drawing to a close. He wrote to Swift, "I am going out of this troublous world, and you among the rest of my friends shall have my best prayers and good wishes." He died the following year, the first to pass out of the brilliant circle. His death came as a great shock to Swift, though for some time he had known that his friend's life would not be prolonged. The loss of his friends by death meant to Swift a bitter deprivation. He was far more closely bound by the ties of friendship than many men of his age and position. Death meant to him the most terrible wrench, and it was his lot to see nearly all his friends removed from his sight, until he felt that life was no longer worth living, and for years before his death he wished to die.

Arbuthnot's position in his century was unique. He was possessed of an inexhaustible fund of knowledge, deep erudition, an unlimited and fertile imagination, and an original sense of humour. Lord Chesterfield says that to "his infinite fund of humour Swift and Pope were more obliged than they have acknowledged." His gifts were at the service of all

his friends. He gave lavishly without stinting, without<sup>e</sup> thought of fame for himself. Yet all his friends knew him to be their equal in intellectual attainments and literary genius; and would have confessed it. "In politics he was a Jacobite by prejudice, and a Republican by reflection and reasoning." "He ate to excess," says Lord Chesterfield. "He put no price upon himself and was considered by those who knew him to be infinitely below his level, for the world is complaisant or dupe enough to give any man the price he sets upon himself provided it be not insolently and overbearingly demanded. It turns upon the manner of asking." Dr. Johnson considered him the most universal genius of the time. Perhaps his character possesses more charm than the rest of those of his century. If we are inclined to generalize on the materialism and lack of imagination in the eighteenth century, we must add a saving clause when we think of Arbuthnot.

With different feelings, perhaps, we turn to Pope, who, though he formed one of Swift's circle, was so much younger than the rest, that perhaps he cannot be considered so closely identified with them. At the time when Swift was at the height of his glory, Pope was a young poet looking to him for patronage. Swift was one of the first, perhaps, to recognize his capacity. He at any rate insisted on his friends subscribing to the works of the young man, who, he said, was "the first poet in the kingdom." Doubtless Swift's estimate was exaggerated, though, if we consider this half of the century,



we are confronted by a grey dearth in poetry, as judged by our own standard. It has no doubt occurred to some thinkers that poetry is, after all, a comparative quantity, regulated to a great extent by convention and fashion, and that we, of a later century, have no right to criticize harshly the standard of an earlier one. To Pope belongs the distinction in his circle, of being the sole producer of unkind satire. The sledge-hammer blows of Swift in "Gulliver's Travels," the delicate raillery of Arbuthnot, the rough yet kindly jeers of Sheridan at his fellows, did not pass the bounds of humanity. But in Pope's works we have a feline malice, a despicable egoism, which is only too likely to call forth a like spirit in his readers. Probably much can be put down to constitutional delicacy, to a feeling of inferiority, resulting from humility of station. His defects must be condoned because he was received on terms of equality in the Swift circle. We know, too, that he was treated with a good deal of affection by Swift and Arbuthnot, and probably he reciprocated it to the best of his ability. His distorted view of life and human nature prevented him from recognizing the good even in his friends, so that he could, after their death, alter their letters for publication to bring his own work and character into a pleasanter light. Thus it is that his testimony to Swift is somewhat valueless, though he speaks of him in terms of appreciation and deep affection. It is perhaps unfair to introduce a character by denunciation. So much has been written of Pope, however, that it is

unnecessary to do more here than touch upon his life and work. He passed through a lonely childhood owing to ill-health. An early precocity, in which he was unfortunately encouraged, resulted in the production of various attempts at translation and verse-writing. His productions of any value date from "The Rape of the Lock," in which there is genius. "Windsor Forest" does not appeal to our ideals of nature-worship, but it contains many elements much to be admired, a finished style, and correctness of rhythm and metre. His great translations were those of the Iliad and Odyssey, by which he achieved his reputation. It is, however, as a satirist that he is of importance, and here the defects in his character have raised him to the position which he holds among English Satirists. A power of delicately inserting a psychological probe, and as delicately describing the results of scientific investigations, forms Pope's chief claim to greatness. In his "Epistles and Satires" we have his finest work. In the "Dunciad" we have a magnificent memorial to Pope's genius, and many crumbling gravestones surmounting the genius of others.

His relations with his family were admirable. He showed himself capable of the strongest affection. His tenderness to his mother after his father's death, is that of the man whose feminine qualities help him to understand those of his women friends, and he nursed her in her declining years with the most assiduous gentleness. He also showed himself capable of great affection in his relations with the

Blounts. He was a man of strong affection and strong dislikes. When his friends were in favour with him his admiration for their work was unstinted. When they had the misfortune to incur his resentment, he would set no bounds to his desire to injure them.

With Dr. Sheridan rests the distinction of sharing Swift's last years in Ireland. Though Swift had known many men, and had been on intimate terms with members of every class and kind of society, it is only when with Dr. Sheridan that we see him really relax. When with him he was not ashamed to display emotion. Sheridan knew him in every sort of humour, had encountered him in every kind of mood. Their friendship dated from Swift's entry on his Deanery, and it lasted until a year or two before the close of Swift's life. Their intimacy came to an end before Swift's death owing to an unfortunate outburst on the part of Swift, who during one of his attacks of morbidness towards the close of his life, misunderstood some action of Sheridan's. This forms, perhaps, one of the saddest episodes of Swift's last years, because it meant voluntary separation from almost the last of his men friends, and reduced his circle to the doctor who looked after him after Arbuthnot's death, and the two women who ministered to his wants.

To Dr. Sheridan, moreover, we are indebted for the stories and authentic anecdotes which form the basis of the life of Swift written by his son Thomas Sheridan. We can be quite sure that none of these

are without that kindly interpretation of his friend's actions which the doctor always put upon them.

Dr. Sheridan was a schoolmaster by profession, famous in the educational world. When Swift became acquainted with him he was master of a small school near Dublin. Swift, seeing that in this sphere of life Dr. Sheridan was something of a genius, did all he could to help him in his profession. The numbers of the school increased enormously, partly because of Swift's connection with it, for his name in Ireland was now sufficient to bring into favour any institution with which he was connected. He always advertised the school as much as possible, emphasized his own connection with it, acted as examiner at the end of the year, and was indefatigable on his friend's behalf.

The story of his first acquaintance with the doctor is related by Sheridan's son. "His" (Sheridan's) "acquaintance with the Dean commenced soon after his settlement in Ireland in the following manner. The Dean, who had heard much of Sheridan as a man of wit and humour, desired a common friend to bring them together. They passed the day much to their mutual satisfaction, and when the company broke up at night, Swift, in his usual ironical way, said, 'I invite all here present to dine with me next Thursday except Dr. Sheridan,' but with a look which expressed that the invitation was made wholly on his account." "There are certain spirits," continues Thomas Sheridan, quaintly, "*concordes animae*, that on the first interview feel an irresistible attraction

to each other, and rush into friendship, as some do into love, at first sight, and such was the case between these two men of genius, who had a great familiarity both of disposition and talents; and who in a short time became inseparable. This union was forwarded, and afterwards cemented, by Stella, who gave the Doctor the preference to all the Dean's other friends."

Swift, moreover, was very much dependent upon Sheridan's kind office for society on his first arrival in Dublin. He knew those in high places, the Archbishop of Dublin, Lord Chancellor Phipps, and Bishop Sterne. But he wished for a circle of friends among whom he could unbend and be quite at his ease. Dr. Sheridan, as the first schoolmaster in Ireland, was well acquainted with the University set in Dublin, and soon introduced Swift among them, so that once more he found himself in the midst of congenial spirits, whose wit was characterized by the same spontaneity as his own. Thomas Sheridan tells us that his father was looked upon to be one of the most agreeable companions in the world, "his society was much courted by all persons of taste. With a select set of these did Swift pass most of his festive hours for many years, but in the round of entertainments care was always taken to engage Sheridan before a party was fixed, as the Dean was never known to be in perfect good humour, but when he was one of the company." Thomas Sheridan adds an amusing little touch, that as the society consisted of the chosen set in the college, and subjects of literature were

frequently the subject of conversation, Swift sometimes found himself at a loss when points of learning came under discussion. He did not wish to be considered inferior to the others, so he found himself compelled to revive his knowledge of Latin and Greek, which in the hurry of politics and bustle of the world, he had so long neglected. With a view to continuing his education he had an apartment fitted up for the Doctor at the Deanery, and used to invite him to spend his vacation with him, so that he might go through a complete course of Greek and Roman classics. This served to increase his already profound admiration for the Doctor's scholarship, and he pronounced him to be "the best scholar in Europe."

In this way the two men lived together in the closest intimacy for parts of many years of their lives. Sheridan was of a transparent nature, genial and affectionate, and so it did not take Swift long to know him thoroughly. Swift, who was of a much more complex type, was quite content that he should remain a little shrouded in mystery, for the Doctor was of too simple and generous a nature ever to attempt to pry into the affairs of a friend which did not concern him. Sheridan was absolutely truthful and incapable of dissimulation. His son says of him: "Of a proud independent spirit, which would not suffer him to crawl to the great ones of the world for any favour, nor to put on even the appearance of flattery. He had a heart formed for friendship, in which Swift had the first place. It was impossible

not to esteem a man possessed of qualities so congenial with his own: but his affection was engaged by those of a less exalted kind, and more pleasing in the general intercourse of life."

Perhaps Sheridan's chief claim to favour with Swift rested in his perpetual flow of spirits. None of his misfortunes, which, alas! were many in number, could restrain Sheridan when he had once embarked on the sea of nonsense. It was impossible for the most gloomy to remain morose in his company. He was absolutely indispensable to Swift, from the beginning of their friendship, and as Swift's gloom began to increase after Stella's death, Sheridan was the only friend who could lighten his hours of depression. He gradually gave up interest in public affairs, he was not capable of any great mental strain, because old age was beginning to tell on his faculties, and he therefore gave himself up to literary trifling, *bagatelle* and *jeu d'esprit*. No one was better able to join Swift in this form of amusement than Sheridan, and for a whole year it was agreed that they should write to each other in verse every day, binding themselves not to take more than five minutes in composing each letter. In this way they produced numbers of riddles in Anglo-Latin, letters and verses. Most of these effusions, however, were burnt, but a few, including the play upon the termination -ling, have been handed down with the rest of Swift's works.

Sheridan, however, met at times with a good deal of reproach from Swift. He was generous to a fault,

and quite unskilled in knowledge of the world, so that the more practical Swift felt that it was incumbent on him to administer reproof. The Doctor was hopelessly extravagant, and continually allowed impulse to carry him away. He was also extremely obstinate, and often refused to listen to the Dean's reproaches. Swift had by this time won an unjustifiable reputation for avarice, and probably the Doctor thought that his friend's reproaches arose merely out of this fault.

Swift found that his only way of helping him was to increase the prosperity of his school, and this he did by extending its reputation as far as possible. He soon saw, however, that Sheridan's expenditure far surpassed his income, and therefore obtained for him the school of Armagh. Sheridan refused to go without consulting certain people whom he called his friends. This enraged Swift very much and he read him a lecture. "Your friends!" he said; "you will ever be a blockhead as to the world. Because they are pleased with your company, and gratify themselves in passing many hours with you in social mirth, you suppose them to be your friends. Believe me there is little true friendship in the world, and it is not impossible but the very men who now hug you to their bosoms, may hereafter turn out to be your inveterate enemies. Take my advice, consult none of them; but accept without hesitation of an offer which will secure you a handsome income for life, independent of casualties. Besides, your school will probably flourish as much there as



here, as the high reputation you have gained in Dublin will follow you to the North, and secure to you all the boys of that most populous and opulent part of the kingdom."

The unfortunate Doctor, however, declined the offer, in deference to the wishes of his friends, and was bitterly disappointed to find that Swift's worst predictions were verified, and by degrees his *quondam* friends fell away, after treating him in a most under-hand manner by setting up a rival school. Swift was no doubt glad to keep the Doctor so near himself, for he depended upon him almost entirely for society in his later years. He made a further effort to help Sheridan in obtaining for him the post of domestic chaplain to Lord Carteret on his appointment to the Government of Ireland. This led a little later to the gift of a living, which Sheridan immediately lost through an unfortunate attack of absent-mindedness. The story is worth quoting in Thomas Sheridan's words: "When he" (Sheridan) "went down to be inducted into his living, he was requested by Arch-deacon Russel of Cork, to supply his place in the pulpit the following Sunday. The Doctor, who was a very absent man, had forgot his engagement, and was sitting quietly at his lodgings *en déshabillé*, when a message from the Parish Clerk, who saw no preacher arrive after the service had begun, roused him from his reverie. He dressed himself with all speed, and of two sermons that he had brought with him, took the first that came to his hand, without looking into it. It happened that the first of August in that

year fell on that very Sunday, and the first of August, being the day on which Queen Anne died, was, in that time of party, a day of great celebrity, and much adverted to by the Whigs. But this circumstance had not at all occurred to the Doctor, who looked on it as a common Sunday, without considering the day of the month. The text of this sermon happened to be "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Such a text on such a day excited a general murmur throughout the whole congregation, to the great surprise of the preacher, who was the only person ignorant of the cause, of which he was not informed till after he had descended from the pulpit, when the affair was past remedy. There happened to be present in the Church a furious Whig, and one of the most violent party-men of the times. He immediately took post for Dublin, where, by his representation of this matter, as Swift has observed in giving an account of this transaction, 'Such a clamour was raised by the zeal of one man, of no large dimensions either of body or mind, that we in Dublin could apprehend no less than an invasion by the Pretender, who must be landed in the South.' Such indeed was the violent clamour raised by the Whigs in general, that the Lord-Lieutenant, in order to pacify them, was obliged to order the Doctor's name to be struck out of the list of chaplains, and to forbid his appearance at the Castle, though he was perfectly satisfied of his innocence, as it appeared that in the whole sermon there was not a syllable relating to Government or party, or to the subject of the day, and

that he had often preached it before under the same text."

Swift saw, to his chagrin, that all his efforts to help his friend were useless. When a little later Dr. Sheridan was presented by Archdeacon Russel with a valuable manor to enable him to support his family, it was of no real benefit to him because, as soon as his income increased, his expenditure increased by double the amount. He was devoted to his children, and insisted on providing them with every possible luxury. Besides this, he received many pupils without payment, and even fed and clothed them at his own expense. Not even the most lucrative income could stand a strain of this sort, and the Doctor was compelled to retract, now in one way, now in another, until finally he exchanged his living for the free-school of Cavan, though to another diminution of his income.

Swift happened to visit him while he was preparing to remove to Cavan. He entered the house just as the workmen were taking down the pictures, and was so overcome by the sight that he burst into tears. It did not take him long to follow his friend, and he made arrangements to pass the winter with him. Swift had now reached the age of seventy. Thomas Sheridan thus describes him at this time: "His person was quite emaciated, and bore the marks of many more years than had passed over his head. His memory greatly impaired, and his other faculties much on the decline. His temper peevish, fretful, morose and prone to sudden fits of passion: and yet

to me his behaviour was gentle, as it always had been from my early childhood, treating me with partial kindness and attention as being his godson."

He had now developed an almost morbid affection for Sheridan. Old age had made rapid strides, and with it had come the morbid passion for economy resulting in the most uncontrolled avarice, so that he could not bear to spend anything on his friend, and yet he must have him with him. Unfortunately for his own peace of mind he was fully conscious of this growing infirmity, and asked the Doctor to tell him of every occasion on which he found him guilty of giving way to the fault of avarice. The result of the Doctor's candour was almost fatal to their friendship, which in fact came to an end a few months later. Dr. Sheridan had been compelled to seek his usual shelter at the Deanery during a move from Cavan to Dublin. While there, he was seized with a sudden attack of illness, which confined him to his room for some time.

He apologized to the Dean for his extensive visit, and Mrs. Whiteway, the housekeeper, a relation of the Dean, said to him, "It is in your power, Doctor, to remedy this by removing to another lodging." The Dean, to his friend's surprise, made no comment, and Dr. Sheridan left the house, never to return to it again. He only lived a short time after this without seeing Swift again.

The account of Swift's parting with his friend, which contains so many distressing elements, points to the fact that the last scene in his life has begun.

It is a dark gloomy chapter on which we have entered, without perhaps one gleam of light. We now have to look at the progress of that decay, saddest of all, of a great human personality. It is unnecessary to state here that Swift never became insane, even during those last three years when he was under medical supervision. He had all his life suffered from a painful disease, *labyrinthine vertigo*, and it has now been fully established on medical authority that the *aphasia* from which he suffered in those last years was caused purely by senile decay. The course of this disease is best described in Swift's own words, given chiefly in letters written at various times. It is best to take it more or less in the form of a diary giving a chronological account of the disease.

Swift, writing to Mrs. Howard, 1727, thus describes the beginning of his complaint: "About two hours before you were born" (*i.e.* 1690) "I got my giddiness by eating a hundred golden pippins at a time at Richmond; and when you were four years and a quarter old, bating two days, having made a fine seat about twenty miles farther in Surrey, where I used to read—and there I got my deafness: and these two friends have visited me, one or other, every year since; and being old acquaintances, have now thought fit to come together."

Lord Orrery says that "in compliance with the advice of his physician, when he was sufficiently recovered to travel, he went into Ireland to try the effects of his native air: and he found so much benefit

by the journey, that in compliance to his own inclination he soon returned to England."

In early life he was of remarkably active habits, and always exceedingly sober and temperate. From the date of his first attack he seems to have had a presentiment of a fatal termination, and the dread of some head affection (as may be gleaned from innumerable passages in his writings) seems to have haunted him afterwards, producing those fits of melancholy and despondency to which it is well known he was subject.

During his first residence at Sheen and Moor Park, prior to 1694, Scott says his studies were partially interrupted by bad health. There is, however, no authority for this statement except a letter to Mrs. Howard.

There is no complaint during his life at Laracor with Stella and Mrs. Dingley, though he was subject to return of his malady when much in society—in London or Dublin.

In 1708 he writes to Archbishop King of Dublin: "I have been confined near two months this winter, and forbid pen and ink by my physician, though, thank God! I was more frightened than hurt. I had a colic about the year 1696 that brought me to extremity, and all despaired of my life and the newsletters reported me dead. It began at the same time of the year, and the same way it did then, and the winters were much alike, and I verily believe, had I not had the assistance of my old physician, Sir Patrick Dean, I should have run the same course,

which I could not have supported, but with a little physic, and the Spa and Bath waters, I escaped without other hardships than keeping at home."

In another letter he writes: "I was then for a long time pursued by a cruel illness that seized me at fits, and hindered me from meddling in any business."

1710-1713.—"In London." Vide "Journal to Stella."

*Oct. 27th.*—"Head pretty well."

*Oct. 31st.*—"Fit of giddiness—oil for ear required."

*Nov. 1st.*—"No giddiness—drank brandy. Sat up the night before my giddiness pretty late, and drank very much, so I will impute it to that; but I never eat fruit nor drink ale."

*Nov. 26th.*—"I have no fit since the first. Other casual illnesses."

*Dec. 1st.*—"No fit since my first: although sometimes head is not quite in good order."

*Dec. 9th.*—"I never was giddy since my first fit, but I have had a cold, etc."

1711. *Jan. 13th.*—"Ugly giddy fit."

[During the last few days of January he had a return of his symptoms.] "My head is not in order, and yet it is not absolutely ill, but giddyish and makes me listless. I walk every day and take drops of Dr. Cockburn, and have just done a box of pills, and to-day Lady Derry sent me some of her bitter drink, which I desire to take twice a day, and hope I shall grow better. My riding in Ireland keeps me well. I am very temperate and eat of the easiest meals, as

I am directed, and hope this malignity will go off: but one fit shakes me a long time."

*Feb. 1st.*—"I was this morning with poor Lady Derry, who is much worse in her head than I. She sends me bottles of her bitter, and we are so fond of one another because our ailments are the same."

*Feb. 4th.*—"I avoid going to Church yet, for fear of my head, though it has been much better these last five or six days since I have taken Lady Derry's bitters."

*Feb. 13th.*—"I have no fits of giddiness, but only some little disorders towards it, and I walk as much as I can." [Active exercise, particularly walking, was of great service to him throughout his illness, also rest, quiet and avoidance of all excitement, as well as great abstinence in his regimen.]

Several attacks may be traced to undue activity in politics and literature, while he ascribes several fits of giddiness to excess in eating and drinking.]

*Feb. 17th.*—"My head has no fits, but is a little disordered before dinner: yet I walk stoutly and take pills and hope to mend." [It is, therefore, evident that unsteadiness of gait was a constant and well-marked symptom of his disease.]

"No fits, but a little disorder every day, which I can easily bear, if it will not grow worse."

[Probably this use of the word "fit" led biographers to believe that he was subject to epilepsy.]

*Apr. 9th.*—"My head is pretty tolerable, but every day I get some little disorder. I have left off snuff since Sunday, finding myself much worse after taking



a good deal of the Secretary's. I would not let him drink one drop of Champagne or Burgundy without water, and in compliment I did the same myself." [Harley then recovering from wound given him by Guiscard.]

16th.—"Drank Tokay;" [the effect of which he felt that night and all next day, yet it did not prevent his accepting invitations.]

18th.—[Grew worse—made some slight mistake in dating his journal, apparently the first symptom of that loss of memory of which he speaks so feelingly twenty-five years after.] "I dined with Lord Anglesea to-day, but did not go to the House of Commons . . . my head was not well enough. I know not what is the matter: it has never been thus before: two days together giddy from morning till night, but not with any violence or pain; and I totter a little but can make shift to walk: I doubt I must fall to my pills again, I think of going into the country a little way."

Apr. 21st.—"My head, I thank God, is better, but to be giddyish three or four days together mortified me. *I take no snuff, and will be very regular in eating little and the gentlest meats.* Well, we dined to-day according to appointment. Lord Keeper went away at near eight, I at eight, and I believe the rest will be fairly fuddled. . . . *I drank little, miss my glass often, put water in my wine, and go away before the rest, which I take to be a good receipt for sobriety.*" [Deafness did not up, to this period, form a symptom.]

Apr. 28th.—"My ears have been, these three months

past, much better than any time these two years : but now they begin to be a little out of order again. My head is better, though not right : but I trust to air and walking."

[He then took long walks every day, and by the advice of Dr. Radcliffe, left off Bohea tea, which he had observed to disagree with him frequently before.

Dr. Cockburn was his general attendant.]

*May 23rd.*—"I thank God I yet continue much better since I left town : I know not how long it may last. I am sure it has done me some good for the present. I do not totter as I did, but walk firm as a rock, only once or twice for a minute. I do not know how, but it went off and I never followed it."

[Summer excessively hot. Swift suffered extremely.] "I never impute any illness or health I have to good or ill weather, but to want of exercise and ill air, or something I have eaten, or hard study, or sitting up, and so I fence against these as well as I can." [Returned to London in July.]

"I fear I shall have the gout ; I sometimes feel pain about my feet and toes. I never drank till within two years, and I did it to cure my head. I often sit evenings with some of these people, and drink in my turn : but I am now resolved to drink ten times less than before : but they advise me to let what I drink be all wine, and not to put water in it."

*Sept. 1st.*—"My head is pretty well, only a sudden turn at any time makes me feel giddy for a moment, and sometimes it feels very stupid, but if it grows no worse I can bear it very well."

[*Swift's deafness* at first was in one ear.]

7th. — "Did I ever tell you that the Lord Treasurer hears ill with the left ear just as I do? He always turns to the right: and his servants whisper to him in that only. I dare not tell him I am so too, for fear that he should think I counterfeited to make my court."

8th. — "God be thanked my head continues pretty well."

October 21st. — "My head has ached a little in the evenings, but it is not of the giddy sort, so I do not much value it."

24th. — "I had a little turn in my head this morning, which though it did not last above a minute, yet, being of the truer sort, has made me as weak as a dog all this day. It is the first I have had this half-year."

Nov. 4th. — "I plainly find I have less twitchings about my toes since these ministers are sick and out-of-town, and that I don't drink with them."

[During the next three months one serious return of his disorder.]

1712. Feb. 24th. — "I dined with the Secretary, and found my head very much out of order, but no absolute fit, and I have not been well all this day. It has shook me a little. I sometimes sit up at Lord Masham's, and have writ much for several days past, but I will mend both."

Mar. 29th. — "Attack similar to eczema and rheumatism, Herpes."

May 10th. — "Pain still continues in shoulder"

"I can never be sick (ill) in the common way; and as to your other notion of it coming without pain, it neither came nor stayed, nor went, without pain, and the most pain I ever bore in my life.

"I drink nothing above wine and water.

"My left hand is very weak and trembles, but my right side has not been touched."

31st.—"My pains continuing still, though with less violence."

*June 17th.*—"My shoulder is a great deal better, however, I feel violent pain in it, but I think it diminishes, and I have cut off some slices from my flannel."

[Attack of herpes left him very weak.]

*September.*—"I have eat," he says, "mighty little fruit, yet I impute my disorder to that little, and shall henceforth wholly forbear it."

*Oct. 9th.*—"I have left Windsor these 10 days.

"I find my head much better than it was. I was very much discouraged, for I used to be ill for three or four days together, ready to totter as I walked. I take 8 pills a day, and have taken, I believe, 150 already."

28th.—"I have been in physick this month, and have been better these three weeks. I stopped my physick, by the Doctor's orders, till he sends me further directions."

[During the next three months remained free from any attacks.]

1713. *Jan. 12th.*—[He tried Spa waters: increased the vertigo and produced oedema of the legs.]

"Took preparation—Pulvis Aloes c. Canella.

"Hiera Picra—two spoonfuls—

"devilish stuff!"

*Beg. May.*—[Appointed Dean of St. Patrick's, returned to Ireland towards the end of the month.]

*July 16th.*—[To Archbishop King.] "I have been so extremely ill with the return of an old disorder in my head that I was unable to write to your Grace."

[Confined to his rooms at this period for a fortnight, but appears to have recovered his health by a short sojourn at his former parish, where Stella then resided.]

"But was so dirty, pale and thin  
Old Read would hardly let him in."

"Bad attack of despondency."

[1714-1719.—Scanty means of ascertaining his state.]

*Dec., 1718.*—Dr. Arbuthnot writes to him, "Glad at my heart I should be if Dr. Helsham or I could do you any good. My service to Dr. Helsham; he does not want my advice in the case. I have done good lately to a patient and a friend in that complaint of a vertigo, by cinnabar of antimony and castor made up into boluses with confection of alkermes. I had no great opinion of the cinnabar, but trying it among other things, my friend found good of this prescription. I had tried the castor alone before, but not with so much success. Small quantities of Tinctura Sacra now and then will do you good."

1719. *Jan. 6th-Feb. 19th.*—"Confined by severe attack."

*May.*—"My health is somewhat undecided, but at best I have an ill-head and an aching heart."

1720.—[Political activity had salutary effect on his body—dispelled his melancholy. Deafness distressing.] "What if I should add," he says, "that once in five or six weeks I am deaf for three or four days."

*May.*—[Severe attack of ague, incapacitated him from writing.] "I am still under the discipline of the bark to prevent relapses."

1721, *Sep.*—[Removed to Gaulstown for his health.]

"I have now and then some threatenings with my head: but have never been absolutely giddy above a minute, and cannot complain of my health, I thank God." [*Allusion to health in writing to Vanessa.*]

*July 15th, 1721.*—"If you knew how I struggle for a little health, what uneasiness I am at in riding and walking, and refraining from everything agreeable to my taste, you would think it but a small thing to take a walk now and then and converse with fools and impertinents to avoid spleen and sickness."

1722.—[To the country for the benefit of the air.]

*July 13th.*—"I fly from the spleen to the world's end.

"I gave all possible way to amusements, because they preserve my temper as exercise does my health: and without health and good humour I would rather be a dog. I have shifted scenes oftener than I ever did in my life, and believe I have lain in thirty beds since I left the town."

1723. *Feb.*—[Gay entreats him to come to England for change of air and says, "Dr. Arbuthnot thinks that your going to Spa and drinking the water

there, would be of great service to you, if you have resolution enough to take the journey.”]

1724. *September*.—[Writes to Lord Carteret.]

“Being ten years older than when I had the pleasure to see your excellency last, by consequence, if I am subject to any ailments, they are now ten times worse, and so it has happened, for I have been now this month past so pestered with a return of the noise and deafness in my ears that I had not spirit to perform the common offices of life.”

1725. *April*.—[Complains bitterly of these two symptoms.]

*Aug.*—“My deafness has left me above three weeks, and therefore I expect a visit from it soon: and it is somewhat less vexatious here in the country, because none are about me but those who are used to it.”

*Aug.*—[Tells Mr. Tickell, son to Surgeon-General of that time, that he had been tormented with an odd vexatious disorder of a deafness and noise in his ears which, he continues, “has returned after having left me above two years, and makes me insupportable to others and myself.”

[Left him in September.]

*Oct.*—“I am fit for nothing but to mope in my chamber.”

*Nov.*—“I have got slowly out of a favourite disorder that hath confined me there 10 days.”

*Nov. 13th.*—[Could enjoy the society of a few friends.]

1726.—[Visited London. Illness of Stella—and recovery.]

Swift gets rid of giddiness at Holyhead.

Returned to London.]

*June*, 1727.—“My stomach pretty good, but for some days my head has not been right—yet it is what I have been formerly used to.”

*July*.—[Decided attack.]

*Aug*.—[Deafness increased to greater extent than he had before experienced—giddiness and tottering.

Could not write for any length of time.]

“I believe this giddiness is the disorder that will at last get the better of me.”

1727.—[Went to Twickenham.

Unmanned by last account of *Stella's illness*.]

“My weakness, my age, my friendship, will bear no more.”

“I walk like a drunken man, and am deafer than ever you knew me. These are the perquisites of living long: the last act of life is always a tragedy at best, for it is a bitter aggravation to have one's best friend go before them.”

*Stella's death*.—[Friends in Ireland wrote in alarm to Pope about Swift's depression.]

*Jan. 28th*, 1728.—[Despair after *Stella's death*. Vide Johnson, “Life of Swift.”

Designed to pass the winter in South of France.]

*Sept. 18th*.—[To Dr. Sheridan (Armagh).] “My continuance here is partly owing to indolence, and partly to my hatred to Dublin. I am in a middling way, between healthy and sick, hardly ever without giddiness or deafness, and sometimes both.”

1729.—[Another very severe attack—continued



throughout January. Some months now without any decided attack—yet his head was never free from giddiness.

After 1730.—Sank in spirits—friends aware of this.]

1731. *June 12th.*—[To Pope:] “I doubt habit has little power to reconcile us with sickness attended by pain. I was growing less patient with solitude, and harder to be pleased with company which I could formerly better digest when I could be easier without it than at present. I grow every day more averse from writing, which is natural, and when I take a pen, say to myself a thousand times ‘Non est tanti.’ My poetical fountain is drained, and I profess, I grow gradually so dry, that a rhyme with me is almost as hard to find as a guinea: and even prose speculations tire me almost as much.”

29th.—[To Gay:] “The giddiness I was subject to, instead of coming seldom and violent, now constantly attends me more or less, though in a more peaceable manner, yet such as will not qualify me to live among the young and healthy.”

[Conscious of the peevishness of his temper.]

“Vertiginosus, inops, surdus, male gratus amicis.”

1731. *Nov.*—[Wrote the verses on his own death.]

See how the Dean begins to break  
 Poor gentleman he droops apace,  
 You plainly find it in his face;  
 That old vertigo in his head  
 Will never leave him till he's dead.  
 Besides his memory decays  
 He recollects not what he says.

1732.—[Hurt his leg and was lame afterwards.]

1733. *Feb.*—"I am just recovering of two cruel indispositions of giddiness and deafness after 7 months. I have got my hearing: but the other evil still clings about me, and I doubt will never quite leave me until I leave it." [Continued until March 20th.]

[Death of Gay increased his despondency.]

"I humdrum it either on horseback or driving, or sitting the evening at home, endeavouring to write, but write nothing, merely out of indolence and want of spirits."

[Despondency increased during the last months of this year.]

1734.—[Improved in health, spirits and appearance, though indolence and apathy increased.

Regimen simple—no tea or coffee.]

1734, *Nov.*—[Tottering again returned—eyesight began to fail—refused to wear spectacles.

*N.B.*—Writings and conversation at this time exhibit no trace of insanity.]

1735, *Nov.*—[Letter to Alderman Barber.]

"As to myself, I am grown leaner than you were when we parted last, and I am never wholly free from giddiness, weakness, and sickness in my stomach, otherwise I should have been among you two or three years ago, but now I despair of that happiness.

"But my fortune is so sunk, that I cannot afford half the necessaries or conveniences that I can still make a shift to provide myself with here.

"You see by my very blottings and intertwinings what a condition my head is in.

"I was unable to attend church for fear of being seized with a fit of giddiness in the midst of the service."

[Designed to pass the winter of this year with Sheridan at Cavan. Reached Cavan the fourth day, greatly fatigued, but apparently improved in spirits from the society of his old and dear friend. It constantly prevented him from taking the usual quantity of exercise—made him fretful and uneasy.]

1736, *Feb.*—[Again laid up with serious attack: illness disqualified him from any conversation—grew much thinner. Could still write to a few friends.

All early friends gone except Pope and Bolingbroke.]

1736, *November.*—Sheridan congratulates Mrs. Whiteway "upon the recovery of our dear friend, the Dean." During this interval Swift began last literary production "The Legion Club," had to leave it half finished owing to sudden attack.

1736, *Dec. 2nd.*—[To Pope.] "I have not been in a condition to write: years and infirmities have quite broken me: I mean that odious continual disorder in my head: I neither read nor write, nor remember, nor converse: all I have left is to walk and ride: the first I can do tolerably: but the latter, for want of good weather at this season, is seldom in my power: and having not an ounce of flesh about me, my skin comes off in ten miles riding because my skin and bones cannot agree together."

1737.—"I am forced to tell you my health is much decayed; my giddiness and deafness more frequent:

spirits I have none left : my memory is almost gone, the public corruptions in both kingdoms allow me no peace or quiet of mind. I sink every day, and am older by twenty years than many others of the same age.

“Besides I can hardly write ten lines without twenty blunders, as you will see by the number of scratchings and blots before this letter is done. Into the bargain I have not one rag of memory, and my friends have all forsaken me, except Mrs. Whiteway, who preserves some pity for my condition, and a few others who love wine that costs them nothing.

“I have not an ounce of flesh or a dram of spirits left me—yet my greatest load is not my years but my infirmities.”

1738, *Jan.* — [Alderman Barber.] “I have for almost three years been only the shadow of my former self, with years of sickness, and rage against all public proceedings, especially in this miserably oppressed country. *I have entirely lost my memory*, except when it is roused by perpetual subjects of vexation.”

[*N.B.*—Strong feeling that he will be reduced to similar state of idiocy as Somers, Marlborough, etc. When he cited these melancholy instances it was always with a heavy sigh, and with gestures that showed great uneasiness, as he felt an impulse of what was to happen to him before he died.

Excess of wine—though conscious of its injurious effect—for he always adopted a course of abstemiousness when he had returned from his giddiness.]

1738.—All the worst symptoms continued without intermission during this year, so that his friends thought he could not long survive.

*N.B.*—Correspondence shows that his affections were warmer than is usual with persons of his time of life, and his intellect clearer.]

1740, *April 29th.*—"I am at this instant unable to move without excessive pain, although not 1000th part of what I suffered all last night, and this morning."

[Yet could give a dinner party within a fortnight after.

He used to forget the names of his friends, even of those who visited him twice a week. As his deafness increased his bodily health became better.]

"I have been very miserable all night, and to-day extremely deaf and full of pain. I was so stupid and confounded that I cannot express the mortification I am under both in body and mind. All I can say is, that I am not in torture; but I daily and hourly expect it. Pray let me know how your health is and your family. I hardly understand one word I write. I am sure my days will be very few, and few and miserable they must be. If I do not blunder, it is Saturday, July 26th, 1740. If I live till Monday I shall hope to see you perhaps for the last time."

1741. *Jan 13th.*—[Perhaps the last document (to Mrs. Whiteway) that he ever penned.

Occasional entries in his account books made as late as 1742.

During his reputed insanity he wrote the following lines—

“ Behold ! a proof of Irish sense  
Here Irish wit is seen !  
When nothing’s left that’s worth defence,  
We build a magazine.”

*N.B.* Only one of his non-medical biographers saw him during the last three years of his life.]

1742.— [Said to have given way to outburst of passion—violent to one of his clergy. From this period his complete loss of memory may be dated, and inability to manage his own affairs.]

It is with the years 1742–1745 that we are chiefly concerned in refuting the charge of madness. During these years Swift was unable to manage his own affairs and was under the care of Dr. Lyons. It was during this time that he dedicated the greater part of his fortune to the foundation, after his death, of the asylum known then as Swift’s Asylum, now as St. Patrick’s Hospital. Very shortly after this he fell into a stupor, from which it was impossible to rouse him. A few sayings of his are recorded of this time. It is unnecessary to repeat them here. What is more to our purpose is the fact that, according to the authority of Deane Swift, his cousin, Swift never during this time made a foolish remark. His utterances were morbid, gloomy, sullen, but always connected, and containing direct bearing on the subject in hand. It is unnecessary to dwell on these painful details. A few months before his death Swift was attacked by



ST. PATRICK'S HOSPITAL, DUBLIN  
FOUNDED BY DEAN SWIFT





a tumour on one eye, which caused him the most excruciating agony and roused him for the time. When the pains had subsided he sank once more into a stupor, and died without speaking again on October 19, 1745.

Faulkner's *Dublin Journal*, October 22, 1745, contained the following obituary notice—

“ Last Saturday, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, died that great and eminent patriot, the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin, in the seventy-eighth year of his age, who was born in the parish of St. Werburgh's, Dublin, the 30th of Nov., 1667, at his uncle Councillor Godwin Swift's house in Hoey's Alley, which in those times was the general residence of the chief lawyers. His genius, works, learning and charity are so universally admired that for a newswriter to attempt his character would be the highest presumption: yet, as the printer hereof is proud to acknowledge his infinite obligation to that prodigy of wit, he can only lament that he is by no means equal to so bold an undertaking.”

Words, too, must fail us. We have just witnessed the passing of a great soul to that haven where he can no longer be assailed by criticism.

“ Ubi saeva indignatio  
Cor ulterius lacerare nequit.”

His own righteous anger at the wrongs of mankind are at an end. The life of pain, mental, moral and physical, is over. Surely few men have suffered so much. Few have deserved to suffer so little. He

was crucified by the sufferings of his fellow-creatures. Knowing himself to be a soul apart, he lived a lonely solitary life, though for happiness he depended, more than most people, on the affection of others. A sense of vocation inspired him throughout his life. A feeling that he had duties to perform, greater than the majority, taught him that their small interests were not for him, that he must enter greater lists. Knowing his danger, fully aware of the risk of failure, he entered the greatest lists that any man can enter—and failed. On this field few have entered and none have been known to succeed. Surely we must give the greater honour to the few. They have staked everything and lost everything.

What is their reward ?

## APPENDIX

*Extract from a paper in Brain, Vol. IV., January, 1882.  
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### DEAN SWIFT'S DISEASE

BY THE LATE DR. BUCKNILL, F.R.S.

"UPON weighing the evidence, it will probably be acknowledged that Jonathan Swift's mysterious illness was an instance of that curious form of disease, Labyrinthine Vertigo or *Le Maladie de Menière* . . . first described in 1861.

The most descriptive passage of his life-long complaint is to be found in his "Journal to Stella," October 31, 1710. "This morning, sitting in my bed, I had a fit of giddiness, the room turned round for about a minute, and then it went off, leaving me sickish, but not very. I saw Dr. Cockburn to-day, and he promises to send me the pills that did me good last year; and likewise has promised me an oil for my ears, that he has been making for that ailment for somebody else."

*January, 1711.*—"I had an ugly fit in my chamber last night." "My head is not in order and yet is not absolutely ill, but giddyish, and makes me listless."

*April 18th.*—"I did not go to the House of Commons about the yarn; my head was not well enough . . . two days together giddy from morning till night and I totter a little but can make a shift to walk."

*September 1st.*—"My head is pretty well; only a sudden turn at any time makes me feel giddy for a moment, and sometimes it feels very stuffed."

In 1720 he writes, "What if I should add that once in five or six weeks I am deaf for three or four days."

In 1724,—“I have been this month past so pestered with a return of the noise and deafness in my ears that I had not the spirit to perform the common offices of life.” Later in the same year, “My deafness has left me above three weeks, and therefore I expect a visit from it soon.” It was evidently periodic and paroxysmal, like the giddiness.

In 1727, in a letter to Sheridan, he says that his deafness is worse than it ever before had been, and that it is accompanied by giddiness and tottering. “I walk like a drunken man and am deafer than ever you knew me.”

In 1728, in “about eight months,” says Wilde, “he had half a dozen attacks of the giddiness and sickness, each of which lasted about three weeks.” In 1731 he wrote to Mr. Gay, “The giddiness I was subject to, instead of coming seldom and violent, now constantly attended me more or less, though in a more peaceable manner, yet such as will not qualify me to live among the young and healthy.” In 1736 he wrote to Pope, “Years and infirmities have quite broke me. I mean that continual disorder in my head.” In 1737 to Alderman Barker, “I am forced to tell you my health is much decayed; my deafness and giddiness more frequent; spirits I have none left; my memory is almost gone.” Impairment of memory he had complained of as early as 1713, and later on in the same year he speaks of his horrible melancholy changing into dulness. . . . Not that he was at any time really of unsound mind or incapable: for when in 1737 in the Bettesworth affair a gratifying address was presented to him, it is recorded that, “when this paper was delivered Swift was in bed, giddy and deaf, having been some time before seized with one of his fits: but he dictated an answer in which there is all the dignity of habitual pre-eminence and all the resignation of humble piety.”

These extracts afford conclusive evidence, I venture to think, that he suffered for twenty years from the disease

whose characteristic symptoms are "that the patient is suddenly seized with vertigo, nausea, depression, and faintness. Usually the giddiness comes on simultaneously with ringing or buzzing in one, or it may be, both ears."

Up to the date to which we have traced the progress of the disease, it appears to have been purely a physical malady, with no mental symptoms, unless some degree of loss of memory can be so called. Swift, indeed, complains bitterly of the impairment, as if memory were gone, and in his declining years of age and sickness it may have been a dull function compared with the brilliant faculty he once possessed. But clearly the memory was still serviceable, which enabled him to compose, with wonderful vivacity, even such poetry as that outburst against political and social corruption, "The Legion Club,"—which Jeffrey thinks "deserving of attention as the most thoroughly animated, fierce and energetic of all Swift's metrical compositions; and though the animation be altogether of a ferocious character, and seems occasionally to verge upon absolute insanity, there is still a force and a terror about it which redeems it from ridicule and makes us shudder at the sort of demoniacal inspiration with which the malison is vented." This poem, written in 1736, was his last work; its appreciation by his most hostile critic will show how little he suffered from loss of any mental faculty when he wrote it . . . that there was any failure of mind this "Legion Club" fully disproves, and if fiercely expressed hatred is any evidence that an author is on the verge of insanity, Jeffrey must have been curiously insensible to the testimony he was bearing against his own soundness of mind in his criticism of the greater master of his own art. . . . Misery and despondency there was, more than enough, but not madness, unless Job was mad. . . . He died October 19, 1745, in the seventy-eighth year of his age, without the least pang or convulsion according to Lord Orrery, but according to Faulkner, "in great agony with strong convulsive fits."

From the plaster cast of Swift's head a layman, Sir Walter

Scott, has learnt that "the expression is most unequivocally maniacal, and one side of the mouth horribly contorted downwards, as if in pain ;" from the same cast the surgeon, Sir William Wilde, that "the expression is remarkably placid, but there is an evident drag on the left side of the mouth, exhibiting a paralysis of the facial muscles, to the right side."

The cast has brought to light the fact that he suffered from a right-sided hemiplegia accompanied by that form of aphasia in which scraps of reasonable language come automatically, though intentional effort can produce no words.

Thus, in Mr. Deane Swift's letter dated April 4, 1744, "he sat rocking himself in a chair saying, 'I am what I am, I am what I am,' " "he will speak incoherent words, but he never yet, as far as I could hear, talked nonsense or said a foolish thing . . . he again endeavoured, with a great deal of pain, to find words to speak to me ; at last, not being able, after many efforts, he gave a heavy sigh and was afterwards silent."

We can now diagnose his lifelong disease as labyrinthine vertigo and his *insanity* as dementia with aphasia, the dementia arising from general decay of the brain from age and disease, the paralysis and aphasia from affections of one particular part of the brain. With all the tortures of the lifelong disease from which he suffered, and its obvious effects upon his temper in his later years, it is wonderful that Swift did retain his reason until, in the seventy-fourth year of his age, he was in all probability struck down by a new disease in the form of a localized left-sided apoplexy or cerebral softening, which determined the symptoms of his *insanity*.

That Swift's works contain no indications of insanity appears to me certain. As well say that Shakespeare was mad because he wrote a good deal which we think nasty. In the fashion of the day Swift was too prone to make what may be called excrementitious jokes and jibes. But that perfect gentleman, Antonio, voided his rheum upon Shylock's beard ; and the same kind of thing runs through our literature, no one objecting,

until we rather recently began to become less natural and more nice. Some of our smaller humorists and men of letters have criticized this great king of humour as if he were both bad and mad, not perceiving that if he were really insane he must be pitied and not cursed. But it is the weakest of arguments to say, with Festus, for want of argument, "Much learning doth make thee mad." There is always weakness in madness, but there is little sign of this in Swift's works. There is always some inconsequence or incoherence in madness, but there is none of this in Swift.





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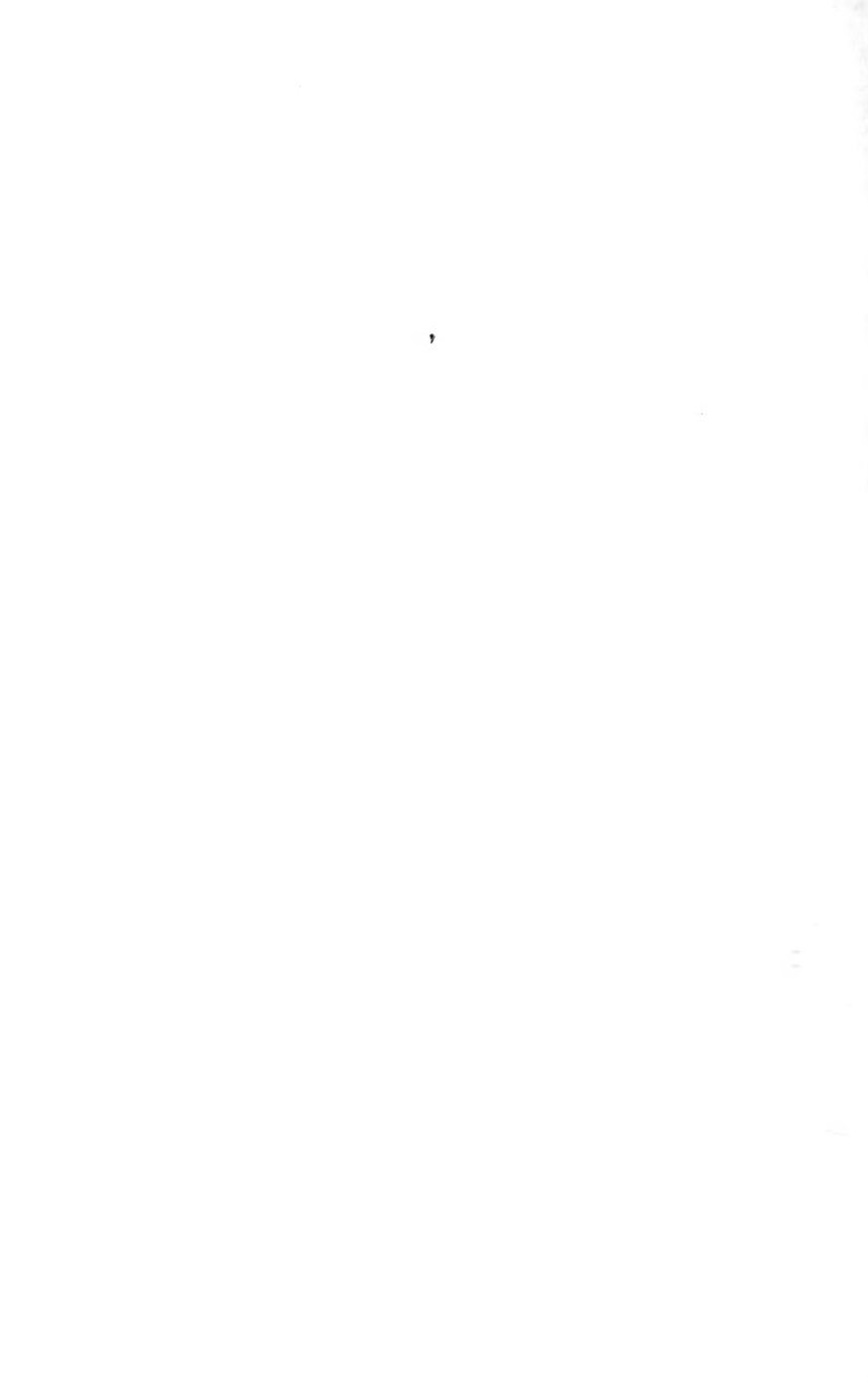
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